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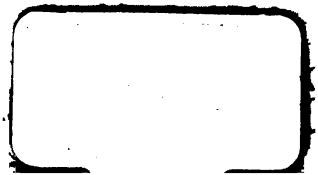

MODERN PAINTERS.

VOL. II.

MODERN PAINTERS.

VOLUME II.,

CONTAINING

PART III.,

SECTIONS I. AND II.

Of the Imaginative and Theoretic Faculties.

By JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.,

AUTHOR OF "THE STONES OF VENICE," ETC., ETC.

. . . . . "Accuse me not
Of arrogance, ...
If, having walked with Nature,
And offered, far as frailty would allow,
My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
Whom I have served, that their Divinity
Revolts, offended at the ways of men.
Philosophers, who, though the human soul
Be of a thousand faculties composed,
And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
This soul, and the transcendent universe
No more than as a mirror that reflects
To proud Self-love her own intelligence."

WORDSWORTH.

NEW YORK:
JOHN WILEY & SONS,
No. 15 ASTOR PLACE.

1885.

KE 3572

TO

THE LANDSCAPE ARTISTS OF ENGLAND

This Work

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY THEIR SINCERE ADMIRER,

THE AUTHOR.

SYNOPSIS OF CONTENTS.

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PART III.

OF IDEAS OF BEAUTY.

SECTION I.

OF THE THEORETIC FACULTY.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE RANK AND RELATIONS OF THE THEORETIC FACULTY.

ALTHOUGH the hasty execution and controversial tone of the former portions of this essay have been subjects of frequent regret to the writer, yet the one was in some measure excusable in a work referred to a temporary end, and the other unavoidable, in one directed against particular opinions. Nor are either of any necessary detriment to its availableness as a foundation for more careful and extended survey, in so far as its province was confined to the assertion of obvious and visible facts, the verification of which could in no degree be dependent either on the care with which they might be classed, or the temper in which they were regarded. Not so with respect to the investigation now before us, which, being not of things outward, and sensibly demonstrable, but of the value and meaning of mental impressions, must be entered upon with a modesty and cautiousness proportioned to the difficulty of determining the likeness, or community of such impressions, as they are received by different men, and with seriousness proportioned to the importance of rightly regarding those faculties over which we have moral power, and therefore

§ 1. With what care the subject is to be approached.

in relation to which we assuredly incur a moral responsibility. There is not the thing left to the choice of man to do or not to do, but there is some sort of degree of duty involved in his determination; and by how much the more, therefore, our subject becomes embarrassed by the cross influences of variously admitted passion, administered discipline, or encouraged affection, upon the minds of men, by so much the more it becomes matter of weight and import to observe by what laws we should be guided, and of what responsibilities regardful, in all that we admit, administer, or encourage.

§ 3. And of what importance considered.

Nor indeed have I ever, even in the preceding sections, spoken with levity, though sometimes perhaps with rashness. I have never treated the subject as other than demanding heedful and serious examination, and taking high place among those which justify as they reward our utmost ardor and earnestness of pursuit. That it justifies them must be my present task to prove; that it demands them has never been doubted. Art, properly so called, is no recreation; it cannot be learned at spare moments, nor pursued when we have nothing better to do. It is no handiwork for drawing-room tables; no relief of the ennui of boudoirs; it must be understood and undertaken seriously or not at all. To advance it men's lives must be given, and to receive it their hearts. "Le peintre Rubens s' amuse à être ambassadeur," said one with whom, but for his own words, we might have thought that effort had been absorbed in power, and the labor of his art in its felicity.—"E faticoso lo studio della pittura, et sempre si fa il mare maggiore," said he, who of all men was least likely to have left us discouraging report of anything that majesty of intellect could grasp, or continuity of labor overcome.* But that this labor, the necessity of which in all ages has been most frankly admitted by the greatest men, is justifiable in a moral point of view, that it is not the pouring out of men's lives upon the ground, that it has functions of usefulness addressed to the weightiest of human interests, and that the objects of it have calls upon us which it is inconsistent alike with our human dignity and our heavenward duty to disobey—

* Tintoret. (Ridolfi. Vita.)

has never been boldly asserted nor fairly admitted; least of all is it likely to be so in these days of dispatch and display, where vanity, on the one side, supplies the place of that love of art which is the only effective patronage, and on the other, of the incorruptible and earnest pride which no applause, no reprobation, can blind to its shortcomings nor beguile of its hope.

And yet it is in the expectation of obtaining at least a partial acknowledgment of this, as a truth influential both of aim and conduct, that I enter upon the second division of my subject. The time I have already devoted to the task I should have considered altogether inordinate, and that which I fear may be yet required for its completion would have been cause to me of utter discouragement, but that the object I propose to myself is of no partial nor accidental importance. It is not now to distinguish between disputed degrees of ability in individuals, or agreeableness in canvases, it is not now to expose the ignorance or defend the principles of party or person. It is to summon the moral energies of the nation to a forgotten duty, to display the use, force, and function of a great body of neglected sympathies and desires, and to elevate to its healthy and beneficial operation that art which, being altogether addressed to them, rises or falls with their variableness of vigor,—now leading them with Tyrtæan fire, now singing them to sleep with baby murmurings.

§ 3. The doubtful force of the term "utility."

Only as I fear that with many of us the recommendation of our own favorite pursuits is rooted more in conceit of ourselves, than affection towards others, so that sometimes in our very pointing of the way, we had rather that the intricacy of it should be admired than unfolded, whence a natural distrust of such recommendation may well have place in the minds of those who have not yet perceived any value in the thing praised, and because also, men in the present century understand the word Useful in a strange way, or at least (for the word has been often so accepted from the beginning of time) since in these days, they act its more limited meaning farther out, and give to it more practical weight and authority, it will be well in the outset that I define exactly what kind of utility I mean to attribute to art, and especially to that branch of it which is concerned with those

impressions of external beauty whose nature it is our present object to discover.

That is to everything created, pre-eminently useful, which enables it rightly and fully to perform the functions appointed to it by its Creator. Therefore, that we may determine what is chiefly useful to man, it is necessary first to determine the use of man himself.

§ 4. Its proper sense.

Man's use and function (and let him who will not grant me this follow me no farther, for this I purpose always to assume) is to be the witness of the glory of God, and to advance that glory by his reasonable obedience and resultant happiness.

Whatever enables us to fulfil this function, is in the pure and first sense of the word useful to us. Pre-eminently therefore whatever sets the glory of God more brightly before us. But things that only help us to exist, are in a secondary and mean sense, useful, or rather, if they be looked for alone, they are useless and worse, for it would be better that we should not exist, than that we should guiltily disappoint the purposes of existence.

And yet people speak in this working age, when they speak from their hearts, as if houses, and lands, and food, and raiment were alone useful, and as if sight, thought, and admiration,* were all profitless, so that men insolently call themselves Utilitarians, who would turn, if they had their way, themselves and their race into vegetables; men who think, as far as such can be said to think, that the meat is more than the life, and the raiment than the body, who look to the earth as a stable, and to its fruit as fodder; vinedressers and husbandmen, who love the corn they grind, and the grapes they crush, better than the gardens of the angels upon the slopes of Eden; hewers of wood and drawers of water, who think that the wood they hew and the water they draw, are better than the pine-forests that cover the mountains like the shadow of God, and than the great rivers that move like his eternity. And so comes upon us that woe of the preacher, that though God "hath made everything beautiful in his time, also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no

§ 5. How falsely applied in these times.

* We live by admiration, hope, and love. (Excursion, Book IV.)

man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end."

This Nebuchadnezzar curse, that sends us to grass like oxen, seems to follow but too closely on the excess or continuance of national power and peace. In the perplexities of nations, in their struggles for existence, in their infancy, their impotence, or even their disorganization, they have higher hopes and nobler passions. Out of the suffering comes the serious mind; out of the salvation, the grateful heart; out of the endurance, the fortitude; out of the deliverance, the faith; but now when they have learned to live under providence of laws, and with decency and justice of regard for each other; and when they have done away with violent and external sources of suffering, worse evils seem arising out of their rest, evils that vex less and mortify more, that suck the blood though they do not shed it, and ossify the heart though they do not torture it. And deep though the causes of thankfulness must be to every people at peace with others and at unity in itself, there are causes of fear also, a fear greater than of sword and sedition; that dependence on God may be forgotten because the bread is given and the water is sure, that gratitude to him may cease because his constancy of protection has taken the semblance of a natural law, that heavenly hope may grow faint amidst the full fruition of the world, that selfishness may take place of undemanded devotion, compassion be lost in vain-glory, and love in dissimulation,* that enervation may succeed to strength, apathy to patience, and the noise of jesting words and foulness of dark thoughts, to the earnest purity of the girded loins and the burning lamp. About the river of human life there is a wintry wind, though a heavenly sunshine; the iris colors its agitation, the frost fixes upon its repose. Let us beware that our rest become not the rest of stones, which so long as they are torrent-tossed, and thunder-stricken, maintain their majesty, but when the stream is silent, and the storm passed, suffer the grass to cover them and the lichen to feed on them, and are ploughed down into dust.

§ 6. The evil consequences of such interpretation. How connected with national power.

And though I believe that we have salt enough of ardent

* Rom. xii. 9.

and holy mind amongst us to keep us in some measure from this moral decay, yet the signs of it must be watched with anxiety, in all matter however trivial, in all directions however distant. And at this time, when the iron roads are tearing up the surface of Europe, as grape-shot do the sea, when their great sagene is drawing and twitching the ancient frame and strength of England together, contracting all its various life, its rocky arms and rural heart, into a narrow, finite, calculating metropolis of manufactures, when there is not a monument throughout the cities of Europe, that speaks of old years and mighty people, but it is being swept away to build cafés and gaming-houses ;* when the honor of

§7. How to be averted.

* The extent of ravage among works of art, or of historical interest, continually committing throughout the continent may, perhaps, be in some measure estimated from the following facts, to which the experience of every traveller may add indefinitely :

At Beauvois—The magnificent old houses supported on columns of workmanship (so far as I recollect) unique in the north of France, at the corner of the market-place, have recently been destroyed for the enlarging of some ironmongery and grocery warehouses. The arch across the street leading to the cathedral has been destroyed also, for what purpose, I know not.

At Rouen—The last of the characteristic houses on the quay is now disappearing. When I was last there, I witnessed the destruction of the noble gothic portal of the church of St. Nicholas, whose position interfered with the courtyard of an hotel ; the greater part of the ancient churches are used as smithies, or warehouses for goods. So also at Tours (St. Julien). One of the most interesting and superb pieces of middle-age domestic architecture in Europe, opposite the west front of the cathedral, is occupied as a café, and its lower story concealed by painted wainscotings ; representing, if I recollect right, twopenny rolls surrounded by circles of admiring cherubs.

At Geneva—The wooden projections or loggias which were once the characteristic feature of the city, have been entirely removed within the last ten years.

At Pisa—The old Baptistery is at this present time in process of being "restored," that is, dashed to pieces, and common stone painted black and varnished, substituted for its black marble. In the Campo Santo, the invaluable frescoes, which might be protected by merely glazing the arcades, are left exposed to wind and weather. While I was there last year I saw a monument put up against the lower part of the wall, to some private person ; the bricklayers knocked out a large space of the lower brickwork, with what beneficial effect to the loose and blistered stucco on which the frescoes are painted above, I leave the reader to imagine ; inserted the

God is thought to consist in the poverty of his temple, and the column is shortened, and the pinnacle shattered, the color denied to the casement, and the marble to the altar, while exchequers are exhausted in luxury of boudoirs, and pride of reception-rooms; when we ravage without a pause all the loveliness of creation which God in giving pronounced good, and destroy without a thought all those labors which men have given their lives, and their sons' sons' lives to complete, and have left for a legacy to all their kind, a legacy of more than their hearts' blood, for it is of their souls' travail, there is need, bitter need, to bring back, if we may, into men's minds, that to live is nothing, unless to live be to know Him by whom we live, and that he is not to be known by marring his fair works, and blotting out the evidence of his influences upon his creatures, not amid the hurry of crowds and crash of innovation, but in solitary places, and out of the glowing intelligences which he gave to men of old. He did not teach them how to build for glory and for

tablet, and then plastered over the marks of the insertion, destroying a portion of the border of one of the paintings. The greater part of Giotto's "Satan before God," has been destroyed by the recent insertion of one of the beams of the roof.

The tomb of Antonio Puccinello, which was the last actually put up against the frescoes, and which destroyed the terminal subject of the Giotto series, bears date 1808.

It has been proposed (or at least it is so reported) that the church of La Spina should be destroyed in order to widen the quay.

At Florence—One of its most important and characteristic streets, that in which stands the church of Or San Michele, has been within the last five years entirely destroyed and rebuilt in the French style; consisting now almost exclusively of shops of bijouterie and parfumerie. Owing to this direction of public funds, the fronts of the Duomo, Santa Croce, St. Lorenzo, and half the others in Florence remain in their original bricks.

The old refectory of Santa Croce, containing an invaluable Cenacolo, if not by Giotto, at least one of the finest works of his school, is used as a carpet manufactory. In order to see the fresco, I had to get on the top of a loom. The *cenacolo* (of Raffaelle?) recently discovered, I saw when the refectory it adorns was used as a coach-house. The fresco, which gave Raffaelle the idea of the Christ of the Transfiguration, is in an old wood shed at San Miniato, concealed behind a heap of faggots. In June, last year, I saw Gentile da Fabriano's picture of the Adoration of the Magi, belonging to the Academy of Florence, put face upmost in a shower of rain in an open cart; on my suggesting the possibility of the rain hurting it, an

beauty, he did not give them the fearless, faithful, inherited energies that worked on and down from death to death, generation after generation, that we, foul and sensual as we are, might give the carved work of their poured-out spirit to the axe and the hammer; he has not cloven the earth with rivers, that their white wild waves might turn wheels and push paddles, nor turned it up under as it were fire, that it might heat wells and cure diseases; he brings not up his quails by the east wind, only to let them fall in flesh about the camp of men: he has not heaped the rocks of the mountain only for the quarry, nor clothed the grass of the field only for the oven.

§ 8. Division of the pursuits of men into subservient and objective.

All science and all art may be divided into that which is subservient to life, and which is the object of it. As subservient to life, or practical, their results are, in the common sense of the word, useful. As the object of life or theoretic, they are, in the common sense, useless; and yet the step between practical and

old piece of matting was thrown over its face, and it was wheeled away "per essere pulita." What fate this signified, is best to be discovered from the large Perugino in the Academy; whose divine distant landscape is now almost concealed by the mass of French ultramarine, painted over it apparently with a common house brush, by the picture cleaner.

Not to detain the reader by going through the cities of Italy, I will only further mention, that at Padua, the rain beats through the west window of the Arena chapel, and runs down *over* the frescoes. That at Venice, in September last, I saw three buckets set in the scuola di San Rocco to catch the rain which came *through* the *canvases* of Tintoret on the roof; and that while the old works of art are left thus unprotected, the palaces are being restored in the following modes. The English residents knock out bow windows to see up and down the canal. The Italians paint all the *marble* white or cream color, stucco the fronts, and paint them in blue and white stripes to imitate alabaster. (This has been done with Danieli's hotel, with the north angle of the church of St. Mark, there replacing the real alabasters which have been torn down, with a noble old house in St. Mark's place, and with several in the narrow canals.) The marbles of St. Mark's, and carvings, are being *scraped* down to make them look bright—the lower arcade of the Doge's palace is whitewashed—the entrance porch is being restored—the operation having already proceeded so far as the knocking off of the heads of the old statues—an iron railing painted black and yellow has been put round the court. Faded tapestries, and lottery tickets (the latter for the benefit of charitable institutions) are exposed for sale in the council chambers.

theoretic science is the step between the miner and the geologist, the apothecary and the chemist; and the step between practical and theoretic art is that between the bricklayer and the architect, between the plumber and the artist, and this is a step allowed on all hands to be from less to greater; so that the so-called useless part of each profession does by the authoritative and right instinct of mankind assume the superior and more noble place, even though books be sometimes written, and that by writers of no ordinary mind, which assume that a chemist is rewarded for the years of toil which have traced the greater part of the combinations of matter to their ultimate atoms, by discovering a cheap way of refining sugar, and date the eminence of the philosopher, whose life has been spent in the investigation of the laws of light, from the time of his inventing an improvement in spectacles.

But the common consent of men proves and accepts the proposition, that whatever part of any pursuit ministers to the bodily comforts, and admits of material uses, is ignoble, and whatsoever part is addressed to the mind only, is noble; and that geology does better in reclothing dry bones and revealing lost creations, than in tracing veins of lead and beds of iron; astronomy better in opening to us the houses of heaven than in teaching navigation; botany better in displaying structure than in expressing juices; surgery better in investigating organization than in setting limbs; only it is ordained that, for our encouragement, every step we make in the more exalted range of science adds something also to its practical applicabilities; that all the great phenomena of nature, the knowledge of which is desired by the angels only, by us partly, as it reveals to farther vision the being and the glory of Him in whom they rejoice and we live, dispense yet such kind influences and so much of material blessing as to be joyfully felt by all inferior creatures, and to be desired by them with such single desire as the imperfection of their nature may admit;* that the strong torrents which, in their own gladness fill the hills with hollow thunder and the vales with winding light, have yet their bounden charge of field to feed and barge to bear; that the fierce flames to

* Hooker, Eccl. Pol. Book I. chap. ii. § 2.

which the Alp owes its upheaval and the volcano its terror, temper for us the metal vein and quickening spring; and that for our incitement, I say not our reward, for knowledge is its own reward, herbs have their healing, stones their preciousness, and stars their times.

§ 9. Their relative dignities.

It would appear, therefore, that those pursuits which are altogether theoretic, whose results are desirable or admirable in themselves and for their own sake, and in which no farther end to which their productions or discoveries are referred, can interrupt the contemplation of things as they are, by the endeavor to discover of what selfish uses they are capable (and of this order are painting and sculpture), ought to take rank above all pursuits which have any taint in them of subserviency to life, in so far as all such tendency is the sign of less eternal and less holy function.* And such rank these two sublime arts would indeed assume in the minds of nations, and become objects of corresponding efforts, but for two fatal and widespread errors respecting the great faculties of mind concerned in them.

§ 10. How reversed through erring notions of the contemplative and imaginative faculties.

The first of these, or the theoretic faculty, is concerned with the moral perception and appreciation of ideas of beauty. And the error respecting it is the considering and calling it æsthetic, degrading it to a mere operation of sense, or perhaps worse, of custom, so that the arts which appeal to it sink into a mere amusement, ministers to morbid sensibilities, ticklers and fanners of the soul's sleep.

The second great faculty is the imaginative, which the mind exercises in a certain mode of regarding or combining the ideas

* I do not assert that the accidental utility of a theoretic pursuit, as of botany for instance, in any way degrades it, though it cannot be considered as elevating it. But essential utility, a purpose to which the pursuit is in some measure referred, as in architecture, invariably degrades, because then the theoretic part of the art is comparatively lost sight of; and thus architecture takes a level below that of sculpture or painting, even when the powers of mind developed in it are of the same high order.

When we pronounce the name of Giotto, our venerant thoughts are at Assisi and Padua, before they climb the Campanile of Santa Maria del Fiore. And he who would raise the ghost of Michael Angelo, must haunt the Sistine and St. Lorenzo, not St. Peter's.

it has received from external nature, and the operations of which become in their turn objects of the theoretic faculty to other minds.

And the error respecting this faculty is, that its function is one of falsehood, that its operation is to exhibit things as they are *not*, and that in so doing it mends the works of God.

§ 11. Object of the present section.

Now, as these are the two faculties to which I shall have occasion constantly to refer during that examination of the ideas of beauty and relation on which we are now entering, because it is only as received and treated by these, that those ideas become exalted and profitable, it becomes necessary for me, in the outset, to explain their power and define their sphere, and to vindicate, in the system of our nature, their true place for the intellectual lens and moral retina by which and on which our informing thoughts are concentrated and represented.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE THEORETIC FACULTY AS CONCERNED WITH PLEASURES OF SENSE.

§ 1. Explanation of the term "theoretic."

I PROCEED therefore first, to examine the nature of what I have called the Theoretic faculty, and to justify my substitution of the term "theoretic" for æsthetic, which is the one commonly employed with reference to it.

Now the term "æsthesis" properly signifies mere sensual perception of the outward qualities and necessary effects of bodies, in which sense only, if we would arrive at any accurate conclusions on this difficult subject, it should always be used. But I wholly deny that the impressions of beauty are in any way sensual,—they are neither sensual nor intellectual, but moral, and for the faculty receiving them, whose difference from mere perception I shall immediately endeavor to explain, no term can be more accurate or convenient than that employed by the Greeks, "theoretic," which I pray permission, therefore, always to use, and to call the operation of the faculty itself, Theoria.

§ 2. Of the differences of rank in pleasures of sense.

Let us begin at the lowest point, and observe, first, what differences of dignity may exist between different kinds of æsthetic or sensual pleasure, properly so called.

Now it is evident that the being common to brutes, or peculiar to man, can alone be no rational test of inferiority, or dignity in pleasures. We must not assume that man is the nobler animal, and then deduce the nobleness of his delights; but we must prove the nobleness of the delights, and thence the nobleness of the animal. The dignity of affection is no way lessened because a large measure of it may be found in lower animals, neither is the vileness of gluttony and lust abated because they are common to men. It is clear, therefore, that there is a stan-

dard of dignity in the pleasures and passions themselves, by which we also class the creatures capable of, or suffering them.

The first great distinction, we observe, is that noted of Aristotle, that men are called temperate and intemperate with regard to some, and not so with respect to others, and that those, with respect to which they are so called, are, by common consent, held to be the vilest. But Aristotle, though exquisitely subtle in his notation of facts, does not frequently give us satisfactory account of, or reason for them. Content with stating the fact of these pleasures being held the lowest, he shows not why this estimation of them is just, and confuses the reader by observing casually respecting the higher pleasures, what is indeed true, but appears at first opposed to his own position, namely, that "men may be conceived, as also in these taking pleasure, either rightly, or more or less than is right." * Which being so, and evident capability of excess or defect existing in pleasures of this higher order, we ought to have been told how it happens that men are not called intemperate when they indulge in excess of this kind, and what is that difference in the nature of the pleasure which diminishes the criminality of its excess. This let us attempt to ascertain.

§ 3. Use of the terms Temperate and Intemperate.

Men are held intemperate (*ἀκόλαστοι*) only when their desires overcome or prevent the action of their reason, and they are indeed intemperate in the exact degree in which such prevention or interference takes place, and so are actually *ἀκόλαστοι*, in many instances, and with respect to many resolves, which lower not the world's estimation of their temperance. For so long as it can be supposed that the reason has acted imperfectly owing to its own imperfection, or to the imperfection of the premises submitted to it, (as when men give an inordinate preference to their own pursuits, because they cannot, in the nature of things, have sufficiently experienced the goodness and benefit of others,) and so long as it may be presumed that men have referred to reason in what they do, and have not suffered its orders to be disobeyed through mere impulse and desire, (though those orders may be full of error owing to the reason's own feebleness,) so long men

§ 4. Right use of the term "intemperate."

* *ὡς δεῖ, καὶ καθ' ὑπερβολὴν καὶ ἐλλειψιν.*

are not held intemperate. But when it is palpably evident that the reason cannot have erred but that its voice has been deadened or disobeyed, and that the reasonable creature has been dragged dead round the walls of his own citadel by mere passion and impulse,—then, and then only, men are of all held intemperate. And this is evidently the case with respect to inordinate indulgence in pleasures of touch and taste, for these, being destructive in their continuance not only of all other pleasures, but of the very sensibilities by which they themselves are received, and as this penalty is actually known and experienced by those indulging in them, so that the reason cannot but pronounce right respecting their perilousness, there is no palliation of the wrong choice; and the man, as utterly incapable of will,* is called intemperate, or ἀκόλαστος.

It would be well if the reader would for himself follow out this subject, which it would be irrelevant here to pursue farther, observing how a certain degree of intemperance is suspected and attributed to men with respect to higher impulses; as, for instance, in the case of anger, or any other passion criminally indulged, and yet is not so attributed, as in the case of sensual pleasures; because in anger the reason is supposed not to have had time to operate, and to be itself affected by the presence of the passion, which seizes the man involuntarily and before he is aware; whereas, in the case of the sensual pleasures, the act is deliberate, and determined on beforehand, in direct defiance of reason. Nevertheless, if no precaution be taken against immoderate anger, and the passions gain upon the man, so as to be evidently wilful and unrestrained, and admitted contrary to all reason, we begin to look upon him as, in the real sense of the word, intemperate, or ἀκόλαστος, and assign to him, in consequence, his place among the beasts, as definitely as if he had yielded to the pleasurable temptations of touch or taste.

§ 5. Grounds of inferiority in the pleasures which are subjects of intemperance.

We see, then, that the primal ground of inferiority in these pleasures is that which *proves* their indulgence to be contrary to reason; namely, their destructiveness upon prolongation, and their incapability of co-existing continually with other delights or perfections of the system.

* Comp. Hooker, Eccl. Pol. Book i. chap. 8.

And this incapability of continuance directs us to the second cause of their inferiority; namely, that they are given to us as subservient to life, as instruments of our preservation—compelling us to seek the things necessary to our being, and that, therefore, when this their function is fully performed, they ought to have an end; and can be only artificially, and under high penalty, prolonged. But the pleasures of sight and hearing are given as gifts. They answer not any purposes of mere existence, for the distinction of all that is useful or dangerous to us might be made, and often is made, by the eye, without its receiving the slightest pleasure of sight. We might have learned to distinguish fruits and grain from flowers, without having any superior pleasure in the aspect of the latter. And the ear might have learned to distinguish the sounds that communicate ideas, or to recognize intimations of elemental danger without perceiving either music in the voice, or majesty in the thunder. And as these pleasures have no function to perform, so there is no limit to their continuance in the accomplishment of their end, for they are an end in themselves, and so may be perpetual with all of us—being in no way destructive, but rather increasing in exquisiteness by repetition.

Herein, then, we find very sufficient ground for the higher estimation of these delights, first, in their being eternal and inexhaustible, and secondly, in their being evidently no means or instrument of life, but an object of life. Now in whatever is an object of life, in whatever may be infinitely and for itself desired, we may be sure there is something of divine, for God will not make anything an object of life to his creatures which does not point to, or partake of, Himself. And so, though we were to regard the pleasures of sight merely as the highest of sensual pleasures, and though they were of rare occurrence, and, when occurring, isolated and imperfect, there would still be a supernatural character about them, owing to their permanence and self-sufficiency, where no other sensual pleasures are permanent or self-sufficient. But when, instead of being scattered, interrupted, or chance-distributed, they are gathered together, and so arranged to enhance each other as by chance they could not be, there is caused by them not only a feeling of strong affection

§ 6. Evidence of higher rank in pleasures of sight and hearing.

towards the object in which they exist, but a perception of purpose and adaptation of it to our desires; a perception, therefore, of the immediate operation of the Intelligence which so formed us, and so feeds us.

Out of which perception arise joy, admiration, and gratitude.

Now the mere animal consciousness of the pleasantness I call æsthesis; but the exulting, reverent, and grateful perception of it I call theoria. For this, and this only, is the full comprehension and contemplation of the beautiful as a gift of God, a gift not necessary to our being, but added to, and elevating it, and twofold, first of the desire, and secondly of the thing desired.

§ 7. How the lower pleasures may be elevated in rank.

And that this joyfulness and reverence are a necessary part of theoretic pleasure is very evident when we consider that, by the presence of these feelings, even the lower and more sensual pleasures may be rendered theoretic. Thus Aristotle has subtly noted, that "we call not men intemperate so much with respect to the scents of roses or herb-perfumes as of ointments and of condiments," (though the reason that he gives for this be futile enough.) For the fact is, that of scents artificially prepared the extreme desire is intemperance, but of natural and God-given scents, which take their part in the harmony and pleasantness of creation, there can hardly be intemperance; not that there is any absolute difference between the two kinds, but that these are likely to be received with gratitude and joyfulness rather than those, so that we despise the seeking of essences and unguents, but not the sowing of violets along our garden banks. But all things may be elevated by affection, as the spikenard of Mary, and in the Song of Solomon, the myrrh upon the handles of the lock, and that of Isaac concerning his son. And the general law for all these pleasures is, that when sought in the abstract and ardently, they are foul things, but when received with thankfulness and with reference to God's glory, they become theoretic; and so I can find something divine in the sweetness of wild fruits, as well as in the pleasantness of the pure air, and the tenderness of its natural perfumes that come and go as they list.

It will be understood why I formerly said in the chapter respecting ideas of beauty, that those ideas were the subject of

moral and not of intellectual, nor altogether of sensual perception; and why I spoke of the pleasures connected with them as derived from "those material sources which are agreeable to our moral nature in its purity and perfection." For, as it is necessary to the existence of an idea of beauty, that the sensual pleasure which may be its basis, should be accompanied first with joy, then with love of the object, then with the perception of kindness in a superior Intelligence, finally with thankfulness and veneration towards that Intelligence itself, and as no idea can be at all considered as in any way an idea of beauty, until it be made up of these emotions, any more than we can be said to have an idea of a letter of which we perceive the perfume and the fair writing, without understanding the contents of it, or intent of it; and as these emotions are in no way resultant from, nor obtainable by, any operation of the intellect, it is evident that the sensation of beauty is not sensual on the one hand, nor is it intellectual on the other, but is dependent on a pure, right, and open state of the heart, both for its truth and for its intensity, insomuch that even the right after action of the intellect upon facts of beauty so apprehended, is dependent on the acuteness of the heart feeling about them; and thus the Apostolic words come true, in this minor respect as in all others, that men are alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, having the understanding darkened because of the hardness of their hearts, and so being past feeling, give themselves up to lasciviousness; for we do indeed see constantly that men having naturally acute perceptions of the beautiful, yet not receiving it with a pure heart, nor into their hearts at all, never comprehend it, nor receive good from it, but make it a mere minister to their desires, and accompaniment and seasoning of lower sensual pleasures, until all their emotions take the same earthly stamp, and the sense of beauty sinks into the servant of lust.

§ 8. Ideas of beauty how essentially moral.

Nor is what the world commonly understands by the cultivation of taste, anything more or better than this, at least in times of corrupt and over-pampered civilization, when men build palaces and plant groves and gather luxuries, that they and their devices may hang

§ 9. How degraded by heartless reception.

in the corners of the world like fine-spun cobwebs, with greedy, puffed-up, spider-like lusts in the middle. And this, which in Christian times is the abuse and corruption of the sense of beauty, was in that Pagan life of which St. Paul speaks, little less than the essence of it, and the best they had; for I know not that of the expressions of affection towards external nature to be found among Heathen writers, there are any of which the balance and leading thought cleaves not towards the sensual parts of her. Her beneficence they sought, and her power they shunned, her teaching through both, they understood never. The pleasant influences of soft winds and ringing streamlets, and shady coverts; of the violet couch, and plane-tree shade,* they received, perhaps, in a more noble way than we, but they found not anything except fear, upon the bare mountain, or in the ghostly glen. The Hybla heather they loved more for its sweet hives than its purple hues. But the Christian theoria seeks not, though it accepts, and touches with its own purity, what the Epicurean sought, but finds its food and the objects of its love everywhere, in what is harsh and fearful, as well as what is kind, nay, even in all that seems coarse and commonplace; seizing that which is good, and delighting more sometimes at finding its table spread in strange places, and in the presence of its enemies, and its honey coming out of the rock, than if all were harmonized into a less wondrous pleasure; hating only what is self-sighted and insolent of men's work, despising all that is not of God, unless reminding it of God, yet able to find evidence of him still, where all seems forgetful of him, and to turn that into a witness of his working which was meant to obscure it, and so with clear and unoffended sight beholding him forever, according to the written promise,—Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

§ 10. How exalted by affection.

* Plato, Phædrus, § 9.

CHAPTER III.

OF ACCURACY AND INACCURACY IN IMPRESSIONS OF SENSE.

§ 1. By what test is the health of the perceptive faculty to be determined?

HITHERTO we have observed only the distinctions of dignity among pleasures of sense, considered merely as such, and the way in which any of them may become theoretic in being received with right feeling.

But as we go farther, and examine the distinctive nature of ideas of beauty, we shall, I believe, perceive something in them besides æsthetic pleasure, which attests a more important function belonging to them than attaches to other sensual ideas, and exhibits a more exalted character in the faculty by which they are received. And this was what I alluded to, when I said in the chapter already referred to (§ 1), that "we may indeed perceive, as far as we are acquainted with the nature of God, that we have been so constructed as in a healthy state of mind to derive pleasure from whatever things are illustrative of that nature."

This point it is necessary now farther to develop.

Our first inquiry must evidently be, how we are authorized to affirm of any man's mind, respecting impressions of sight, that it is in a healthy state or otherwise. What canon or test is there by which we may determine of these impressions that they are or are not *rightly* esteemed beautiful? To what authority, when men are at variance with each other on this subject, shall it be deputed to judge which is right? or is there any such authority or canon at all?

For it does not at first appear easy to prove that men ought to like one thing rather than another, and although this is granted generally by men's speaking of bad or good taste, it is frequently denied when we pass to particulars, by the assertion of each individual that he has a right to his opinion—a right which is sometimes claimed even in moral matters, though then

palpably without foundation, but which does not appear altogether irrational in matters æsthetic, wherein little operation of voluntary choice is supposed possible. It would appear strange, for instance, to assert, respecting a particular person who preferred the scent of violets to roses, that he had no right to do so. And yet, while I have said that the sensation of beauty is intuitive and necessary, as men derive pleasure from the scent of a rose, I have assumed that there are some sources from which it is rightly derived, and others from which it is wrongly derived, in other words that men have no right to think some things beautiful, and no right to remain apathetic with regard to others.

Hence then arise two questions, according to the sense in which the word right is taken; the first, in what way an impression of sense may be deceptive, and therefore a conclusion respecting it untrue; and the second, in what way an impression of sense, or the preference of one, may be a subject of will, and therefore of moral duty or delinquency.

§ 2. And in what sense may the terms Right and Wrong be attached to its conclusions?

To the first of these questions, I answer that we cannot speak of the immediate impression of sense as false, nor of its preference to others as mistaken, for no one can be deceived respecting the actual sensation he perceives or prefers. But falsity may attach to his assertion or supposition, either that what he himself perceives is from the same object perceived by others, or is always to be by himself perceived, or is always to be by himself preferred; and when we speak of a man as wrong in his impressions of sense, we either mean that he feels differently from all, or a majority, respecting a certain object, or that he prefers at present those of his impressions, which ultimately he will not prefer.

To the second I answer, that over immediate impressions and immediate preferences we have no power, but over ultimate impressions, and especially ultimate preferences we have; and that, though we can neither at once choose whether we shall see an object, red, green, or blue, nor determine to like the red better than the blue, or the blue better than the red, yet we can, if we choose, make ourselves ultimately susceptible of such impressions in other degrees, and capable of pleasures in them in dif-

ferent measure; and because, wherever power of any kind is given, there is responsibility attached, it is the duty of men to prefer certain impressions of sense to others, because they have the power of doing so, this being precisely analogous to the law of the moral world, whereby men are supposed not only capable of governing their likes and dislikes, but the whole culpability or propriety of actions is dependent upon this capability, so that men are guilty or otherwise, not for what they do, but for what they desire, the command being not, thou shalt obey, but thou shalt love, the Lord thy God, which, if men were not capable of governing and directing their affections, would be the command of an impossibility.

§ 3. What power we have over impressions of sense.

I assert, therefore, that even with respect to impressions of sense, we have a power of preference, and a corresponding duty, and I shall show first the nature of the power, and afterwards the nature of the duty.

Let us take an instance from one of the lowest of the senses, and observe the kind of power we have over the impressions of lingual taste. On the first offering of two different things to the palate, it is not in our power to prevent or command the instinctive preference. One will be unavoidably and helplessly preferred to the other. But if the same two things be submitted to judgment frequently and attentively, it will be often found that their relations change. The palate, which at first perceived only the coarse and violent qualities of either, will, as it becomes more experienced, acquire greater subtilty and delicacy of discrimination, perceiving in both agreeable or disagreeable qualities at first unnoticed, which on continued experience will probably become more influential than the first impressions; and whatever this final verdict may be, it is felt by the person who gives it, and received by others as a more correct one than the first.

So, then, the power we have over the preference of impressions of taste is not actual nor immediate, but only a power of testing and comparing them frequently and carefully, until that which is the more permanent, the more consistently agreeable, be determined. But when the instrument of taste is thus in some degree perfected and rendered subtile, by its being practised upon a single

§ 4. Depends on acuteness of attention.

object, its conclusions will be more rapid with respect to others, and it will be able to distinguish more quickly in other things, and even to prefer at once, those qualities which are calculated finally to give it most pleasure, though more capable with respect to those on which it is more frequently exercised; whence people are called judges with respect to this or that particular object of taste.

§ 5. Ultimate conclusions universal.

Now that verdicts of this kind are received as authoritative by others, proves another and more important fact, namely, that not only changes of opinion take place in consequence of experience, but that those changes are from variation of opinion to unity of opinion; and that whatever may be the differences of estimate among unpractised or uncultivated tastes, there will be unity of taste among the experienced. And that therefore the operation of repeated trial and experience is to arrive at principles of preference in some sort common to all, and which are a part of our nature.

I have selected the sense of taste for an instance, because it is the least favorable to the position I hold, since there is more latitude allowed, and more actual variety of verdict in the case of this sense than of any other; and yet, however susceptible of variety even the ultimate approximations of its preferences may be, the authority of judges is distinctly allowed, and we hear every day the admission, by those of unpractised palate, that they are, or may be wrong in their opinions respecting the real pleasurableness of things either to themselves, or to others.

§ 6. What duty is attached to this power over impressions of sense.

The sense, however, in which they thus use the word "wrong" is merely that of falseness or inaccuracy in conclusion, not of moral delinquency. But there is, as I have stated, a duty, more or less imperative, attached to every power we possess, and therefore to this power over the lower senses as well as to all others.

And this duty is evidently to bring every sense into that state of cultivation, in which it shall both form the truest conclusions respecting all that is submitted to it, and procure us the greatest amount of pleasure consistent with its due relation to other senses and functions. Which three constituents of perfection in sense, true judgment, maximum sensibility, and right

relation to others, are invariably co-existent and involved one by the other, for the true judgment is the result of the high sensibility, and the high sensibility of the right relation. Thus, for instance, with respect to pleasures of taste, it is our duty not to devote such inordinate attention to the discrimination of them as must be inconsistent with our pursuit, and destructive of our capacity of higher and preferable pleasures, but to cultivate the sense of them in that way which is consistent with all other good, by temperance, namely, and by such attention as the mind at certain resting moments may fitly pay even to so ignoble a source of pleasure as this, by which discipline we shall bring the faculty of taste itself to its real maximum of sensibility; for it may not be doubted but that health, hunger, and such general refinement of bodily habits as shall make the body a perfect and fine instrument in all respects, are better promoters of actual sensual enjoyment of taste, than the sickened, sluggish, hard-stimulated fastidiousness of Epicurism.

§ 7. How rewarded.

So also it will certainly be found with all the senses, that they individually receive the greatest and purest pleasure when they are in right condition and degree of subordination to all the rest; and that by the over cultivation of any one, (for morbid sources of pleasure and correspondent temptations to irrational indulgence, confessedly are attached to all,) we shall add more to their power as instruments of punishment than of pleasure.

We see then, in this example of the lowest sense, that the power we have over sensations and preferences depends mainly on the exercise of attention through certain prolonged periods, and that by this exercise, we arrive at ultimate, constant, and common sources of agreeableness, casting off those which are external, accidental, and individual.

§ 8. Especially with respect to ideas of beauty.

That then which is required in order to the attainment of accurate conclusions respecting the essence of the beautiful, is nothing more than earnest, loving, and unselfish attention to our impressions of it, by which those which are shallow, false, or peculiar to times and temperaments, may be distinguished from those that are eternal. And this dwelling upon, and fond contemplation of them, (the anschauung of the Germans,) is perhaps as much as was meant

by the Greek theoria; and it is indeed a very noble exercise of the souls of men, and one by which they are peculiarly distinguished from the anima of lower creatures, which cannot, I think, be proved to have any capacity of contemplation at all, but only a restless vividness of perception and conception, the "fancy" of Hooker (Eccl. Pol. Book i. Chap. vi. 2). And yet this dwelling upon them comes not up to that which I wish to express by the word theoria, unless it be accompanied by full perception of their being a gift from and manifestation of God, and by all those other nobler emotions before described, since not until so felt is their essential nature comprehended.

§ 9. Errors induced by the power of habit.

But two very important points are to be observed respecting the direction and discipline of the attention in the early stages of judgment. The first, that, for many beneficent purposes, the nature of man has been made reconcilable by custom to many things naturally painful to it, and even improper for it, and that therefore, though by continued experience, united with thought, we may discover that which is best of several, yet if we submit ourselves to authority or fashion, and close our eyes, we may be by custom made to tolerate, and even to love and long for, that which is naturally painful and pernicious to us, whence arise incalculable embarrassments on the subject of art.

§ 10. The necessity of submission in early stages of judgment.

The second, that, in order to the discovery of that which is best of two things, it is necessary that both should be equally submitted to the attention; and therefore that we should have so much faith in authority as shall make us repeatedly observe and attend to that which is said to be right, even though at present we may not feel it so. And in the right mingling of this faith with the openness of heart, which proves all things, lies the great difficulty of the cultivation of the taste, as far as the spirit of the scholar is concerned, though even when he has this spirit, he may be long retarded by having evil examples submitted to him by ignorant masters.

The temper, therefore, by which right taste is formed, is first, patient. It dwells upon what is submitted to it, it does not trample upon it lest it should be pearls, even though it look like husks, it is a good ground, soft, penetrable, retentive, it

does not send up thorns of unkind thoughts, to choke the weak seed, it is hungry and thirsty too, and drinks all the dew that falls on it, it is an honest and good heart, that shows no too ready springing before the sun be up, but fails not afterwards; it is distrustful of itself, so as to be ready to believe and to try all things, and yet so trustful of itself, that it will neither quit what it has tried, nor take anything without trying. And that pleasure which it has in things that it finds true and good, is so great that it cannot possibly be led aside by any tricks of fashion, nor diseases of vanity, it cannot be cramped in its conclusions by partialities and hypocrisies, its visions and its delights are too penetrating, too living, for any white-washed object or shallow fountain long to endure or supply. It clasps all that it loves so hard, that it crushes it if it be hollow.

§ 11. The large scope of matured judgment.

Now, the conclusions of this disposition are sure to be eventually right, more and more right according to the general maturity of all the powers, but it is sure to come right at last, because its operation is in analogy to, and in harmony with, the whole spirit of the Christian moral system, and that which it will ultimately love and rest in, are great sources of happiness common to all the human race, and based on the relations they hold to their Creator.

These common and general sources of pleasure are, I believe, a certain seal, or impress of divine work and character, upon whatever God has wrought in all the world; only, it being necessary for the perception of them, that their contraries should also be set before us, these divine qualities, though inseparable from all divine works, are yet suffered to exist in such varieties of degree, that their most limited manifestation shall, in opposition to their most abundant, act as a foil or contrary, just as we conceive of cold as contrary to heat, though the most extreme cold we can produce or conceive is not inconsistent with an unknown amount of heat in the body.

§ 12. How distinguishable from false taste.

Our purity of taste, therefore, is best tested by its universality. for if we can only admire this thing or that, we may be sure that our cause for liking is of a finite and false nature. But if we can perceive beauty in everything of God's doing, we may argue that we have reached the true perception of its universal laws. Hence, false

endeavor to employ in the succeeding investigations, a process perfectly safe, so long as we are quite sure that we are reasoning concerning objects which produce in us one and the same sensation, but not safe if the sensation produced be of a different nature, though it may be equally agreeable; for what produces a different sensation must be a different cause. And the difficulty of reasoning respecting beauty arises chiefly from the ambiguity of the word, which stands in different people's minds for totally different sensations, for which there can be no common cause.

§ 16. With what liabilities to error.

When, for instance, Mr. Alison endeavors to support his position that "no man is sensible to beauty in those objects with regard to which he has not previous ideas," by the remark that "the beauty of a theory, or of a relic of antiquity, is unintelligible to a peasant," we see at once that it is hopeless to argue with a man who, under his general term beauty, may, for anything we know, be sometimes speaking of mathematical demonstrability and sometimes of historical interest; while even if we could succeed in limiting the term to the sense of external attractiveness, there would be still room for many phases of error; for though the beauty of a snowy mountain and of a human cheek or forehead, so far as both are considered as mere matter, is the same, and traceable to certain qualities of color and line, common to both, and by reason extricable, yet the flush of the cheek and moulding of the brow, as they express modesty, affection, or intellect, possess sources of agreeableness which are not common to the snowy mountain, and the interference of whose influence we must be cautious to prevent in our examination of those which are material and universal.*

§ 17. The term "beauty" how limitable in the outset. Divided into typical and vital.

The first thing, then, that we have to do, is accurately to discriminate and define those appearances from which we are about to reason as belonging to beauty, properly so called, and to clear the ground of all the confused ideas and erroneous theories with which the misapprehension or metaphorical use of the term has encumbered it.

* Compare Spenser. (Hymn to Beauty.)

"But ah, believe me, there is more than so,
That works such wonders in the minds of men."

By the term beauty, then, properly are signified two things. First, that external quality of bodies already so often spoken of, and which, whether it occur in a stone, flower, beast, or in man, is absolutely identical, which, as I have already asserted, may be shown to be in some sort typical of the Divine attributes, and which, therefore, I shall, for distinction's sake, call typical beauty; and, secondarily, the appearance of felicitous fulfilment of function in living things, more especially of the joyful and right exertion of perfect life in man. And this kind of beauty I shall call vital beauty.

Any application of the word beautiful to other appearances or qualities than these, is either false or metaphorical, as, for instance, to the splendor of a discovery, the fitness of a proportion, the coherence of a chain of reasoning, or the power of bestowing pleasure which objects receive from association, a power confessedly great, and interfering, as we shall presently find, in a most embarrassing way with the attractiveness of inherent beauty.

But in order that the mind of the reader may not be biassed at the outset by that which he may happen to have received of current theories respecting beauty, founded on the above metaphorical uses of the word, (theories which are less to be reprobated as accounting falsely for the sensations of which they treat, than as confusing two or more pleasurable sensations together,) I shall briefly glance at the four erroneous positions most frequently held upon this subject, before proceeding to examine those typical and vital properties of things, to which I conceive that all our original conceptions of beauty may be traced.

CHAPTER IV.

OF FALSE OPINIONS HELD CONCERNING BEAUTY.

§ 1. Of the false opinion that truth is beauty, and vice versa.

I PURPOSE at present to speak only of four of the more current opinions respecting beauty, for of the errors connected with the pleasurableness of proportion, and of the expression of right feelings in the countenance, I shall have opportunity to treat in the succeeding chapters; (compare Ch. VI. Ch. XVI.)

Those erring or inconsistent positions which I would at once dismiss are, the first, that the beautiful is the true, the second, that the beautiful is the useful, the third, that it is dependent on custom, and the fourth, that it is dependent on the association of ideas.

To assert that the beautiful is the true, appears, at first, like asserting that propositions are matter, and matter propositions. But giving the best and most rational interpretation we can, and supposing the holders of this strange position to mean only that things are beautiful which appear what they indeed are, and ugly which appear what they are not, we find them instantly contradicted by each and every conclusion of experience. A stone looks as truly a stone as a rose looks a rose, and yet is not so beautiful; a cloud may look more like a castle than a cloud, and be the more beautiful on that account. The mirage of the desert is fairer than its sands; the false image of the under heaven fairer than the sea. I am at a loss to know how any so untenable a position could ever have been advanced; but it may, perhaps, have arisen from some confusion of the beauty of art with the beauty of nature, and from an illogical expansion of the very certain truth, that nothing is beautiful in art, which, professing to be an imitation, or a statement, is not as such in some sort true.

That the beautiful is the useful, is an assertion evidently based on that limited and false sense of the latter term which I

have already deprecated. As it is the most degrading and dangerous supposition which can be advanced on the subject, so, fortunately, it is the most palpably absurd. It is to confound admiration with hunger, love with lust, and life with sensation; it is to assert that the human creature has no ideas and no feelings, except those ultimately referable to its brutal appetites. It has not a single fact nor appearance of fact to support it, and needs no combating, at least until its advocates have obtained the consent of the majority of mankind, that the most beautiful productions of nature are seeds and roots; and of art, spades and millstones.

§ 2. Of the false opinion that beauty is usefulness. Compare Chap. xii. § 5.

Somewhat more rational grounds appear for the assertion that the sense of the beautiful arises from familiarity with the object, though even this could not long be maintained by a thinking person. For all that can be alleged in defence of such a supposition is, that familiarity deprives some objects which at first appeared ugly, of much of their repulsiveness, whence it is as rational to conclude that familiarity is the cause of beauty, as it would be to argue that because it is possible to acquire a taste for olives, therefore custom is the cause of lusciousness in grapes. Nevertheless, there are some phenomena resulting from the tendency of our nature to be influenced by habit of which it may be well to observe the limits.

§ 3. Of the false opinion that beauty results from custom. Compare Chap. vi. § 1.

Custom has a twofold operation: the one to deaden the frequency and force of repeated impressions, the other to endear the familiar object to the affections. Commonly, where the mind is vigorous, and the power of sensation very perfect, it has rather the last operation than the first; with meaner minds, the first takes place in the higher degree, so that they are commonly characterized by a desire of excitement, and the want of the loving, fixed, theoretic power. But both take place in some degree with all men, so that as life advances, impressions of all kinds become less rapturous owing to their repetition. It is however beneficently ordained that repulsiveness shall be diminished by custom in a far greater degree than the sensation of beauty, so that the anatomist in a little time loses all sense of horror in the

§ 4. The twofold operation of custom. It deadens sensation, but confirms affection.

torn flesh, and carous bone, while the sculptor ceases not to feel to the close of his life, the deliciousness of every line of the outward frame. So then as in that with which we are made familiar, the repulsiveness is constantly diminishing, and such claims as it may be able to put forth on the affections are daily becoming stronger, while in what is submitted to us of new or strange, that which may be repulsive is felt in its full force, while no hold is as yet laid on the affections, there is a very strong preference induced in most minds for that to which they are not accustomed over that they know not, and this is strongest in those which are least open to sensations of positive beauty. But however far this operation may be carried, its utmost effect is but the deadening and approximating the sensations of beauty and ugliness. It never mixes nor crosses, nor in any way alters them; it has not the slightest connection with nor power over their nature. By tasting two wines alternately, we may deaden our perception of their flavor; nay, we may even do more than can ever be done in the case of sight, we may confound the two flavors together. But it will hardly be argued therefore that custom is the cause of either flavor. And so, though by habit we may deaden the effect of ugliness or beauty, it is not for that reason to be affirmed that habit is the cause of either sensation. We may keep a skull beside us as long as we please, we may overcome its repulsiveness, we may render ourselves capable of perceiving many qualities of beauty about its lines, we may contemplate it for years together if we will, it and nothing else, but we shall not get ourselves to think as well of it as of a child's fair face.

§ 5. But never either creates or destroys the essence of beauty.

It would be easy to pursue the subject farther, but I believe that every thoughtful reader will be perfectly well able to supply farther illustrations, and sweep away the sandy foundations of the opposite theory, unassisted. Let it, however, be observed, that in spite of all custom, an Englishman instantly acknowledges, and at first sight, the superiority of the turban to the hat, or of the plaid to the coat, that whatever the dictates of immediate fashion may compel, the superior gracefulness of the Greek or middle age costumes is invariably felt, and that, respecting what has been asserted of negro nations looking with disgust on the white face, no im-

§ 6. Instances.

portance whatever is to be attached to the opinions of races who have never received any ideas of beauty whatsoever, (these ideas being only received by minds under some certain degree of cultivation,) and whose disgust arises naturally from what they may suppose to be a sign of weakness or ill health. It would be futile to proceed into farther detail. I pass to the last and most weighty theory, that the agreeableness in objects which we call beauty is the result of the association with them of agreeable or interesting ideas.

§ 7. Of the false opinion that beauty depends on the association of ideas.

Frequent has been the support, and wide the acceptance of this supposition, and yet I suppose that no two consecutive sentences were ever written in defence of it, without involving either a contradiction or a confusion of terms. Thus Alison, "There are scenes undoubtedly more beautiful than Runnymede, yet to those who recollect the great event that passed there, there is no scene perhaps which so strongly seizes on the imagination." Here we are wonder-struck at the audacious obtuseness which would prove the power of imagination by its overcoming that very other power (of inherent beauty) whose existence the arguer denies. For the only logical conclusion which can possibly be drawn from the above sentence is, that imagination is *not* the source of beauty, for although no scene seizes so strongly on the imagination, yet there are scenes "more beautiful than Runnymede." And though instances of self-contradiction as laconic and complete as this are to be found in few writers except Alison, yet if the arguments on the subject be fairly sifted from the mass of confused language with which they are always encumbered and placed in logical form, they will be found invariably to involve one of these two syllogisms, either, association gives pleasure, and beauty gives pleasure, therefore association is beauty. Or, the power of association is stronger than the power of beauty, therefore the power of association *is* the power of beauty.

§ 8. Association. Is, 1st, rational. It is of no efficiency as a cause of beauty.

Nevertheless it is necessary for us to observe the real value and authority of association in the moral system, and how ideas of actual beauty may be affected by it, otherwise we shall be liable to embarrassment throughout the whole of the succeeding argument.

Association is of two kinds. Rational and accidental. By

rational association I understand the interest which any object may bear historically as having been in some way connected with the affairs or affections of men; an interest shared in the minds of all who are aware of such connection: which to call beauty is mere and gross confusion of terms, it is no theory to be confuted, but a misuse of language to be set aside, a misuse involving the positions that in uninhabited countries the vegetation has no grace, the rock no dignity, the cloud no color, and that the snowy summits of the Alps receive no loveliness from the sunset light, because they have not been polluted by the wrath, ravage, and misery of men.

§ 9. Association accidental. The extent of its influence.

By accidental association, I understand the accidental connection of ideas and memories with material things, owing to which those material things are regarded as agreeable or otherwise, according to the nature of the feelings or recollections they summon; the association being commonly involuntary and oftentimes so vague as that no distinct image is suggested by the object, but we feel a painfulness in it or pleasure from it, without knowing wherefore. Of this operation of the mind (which is that of which I spoke as causing inextricable embarrassments on the subject of beauty) the experience is constant, so that its more energetic manifestations require no illustration. But I do not think that the minor degrees and shades of this great influence have been sufficiently appreciated. Not only all vivid emotions and all circumstances of exciting interest leave their light and shadow on the senseless things and instruments among which or through whose agency they have been felt or learned, but I believe that the eye cannot rest on a material form, in a moment of depression or exultation, without communicating to that form a spirit and a life, a life which will make it afterwards in some degree loved or feared, a charm or a painfulness for which we shall be unable to account even to ourselves, which will not indeed be perceptible, except by its delicate influence on our judgment in cases of complicated beauty. Let the eye but rest on a rough piece of branch of curious form during a conversation with a friend, rest, however, unconsciously, and though the conversation be forgotten, though every circumstance connected with it be as utterly lost to the memory as though it had not

been, yet the eye will, through the whole life after, take a certain pleasure in such boughs which it had not before, a pleasure so slight, a trace of feeling so delicate as to leave us utterly unconscious of its peculiar power, but undestroyable by any reasoning, a part, thenceforward, of our constitution, destroyable only by the same arbitrary process of association by which it was created. Reason has no effect upon it whatsoever. And there is probably no one opinion which is formed by any of us, in matters of taste, which is not in some degree influenced by unconscious association of this kind. In many who have no definite rules of judgment, preference is decided by little else, and thus, unfortunately, its operations are mistaken for, or rather substituted for, those of inherent beauty, and its real position and value in the moral system is in a great measure overlooked.

§ 10. The dignity of its function.

For I believe that mere pleasure and pain have less associative power than duty performed or omitted, and that the great use of the associative faculty is not to add beauty to material things, but to add force to the conscience. But for this external and all-powerful witness, the voice of the inward guide might be lost in each particular instance, almost as soon as disobeyed; the echo of it in after time, whereby, though perhaps feeble as warning, it becomes powerful as punishment, might be silenced, and the strength of the protection pass away in the lightness of the lash. Therefore it has received the power of enlisting external and unmeaning things in its aid, and transmitting to all that is indifferent, its own authority to reprove or reward, so that, as we travel the way of life, we have the choice, according to our working, of turning all the voices of nature into one song of rejoicing, and all her lifeless creatures into a glad company, whereof the meanest shall be beautiful in our eyes, by its kind message, or of withering and quenching her sympathy into a fearful, withdrawn, silence of condemnation, or into a crying out of her stones, and a shaking of her dust against us. Nor is it any marvel that the theoretic faculty should be overpowered by this momentous operation, and the indifferent appeals and inherent glories of external things in the end overlooked, when the perfection of God's works is felt only as the sweetness of his

promises, and their admirableness only as the threatenings of his power.

But it is evident that the full exercise of this noble function of the associative faculty is inconsistent with absolute and incontrovertible conclusions on subjects of theoretic preference.

§ 11. How it is connected with impressions of beauty.

For it is quite impossible for any individual to distinguish in himself the unconscious underworking of indefinite association, peculiar to him individually, from those great laws of choice under which he is comprehended with all his race. And it is well for us that it is so, the harmony of God's good work is not in us interrupted by this mingling of universal and peculiar principles; for by these such difference is secured in the feelings as shall make fellowship itself more delightful, by its inter-communicate character, and such variety of feeling also in each of us separately as shall make us capable of enjoying scenes of different kinds and orders, instead of morbidly seeking for some perfect epitome of the beautiful in one; and also that deadening by custom of theoretic impressions to which I have above alluded, is counterbalanced by the pleasantness of acquired association; and the loss of the intense feeling of the youth, which "had no need of a remoter charm, by thought supplied, or any interest, unborrowed from the eye," is replaced by the gladness of conscience, and the vigor of the reflecting and imaginative faculties, as they take their wide and aged grasp of the great relations between the earth and its dead people.

In proportion therefore to the value, constancy, and efficiency of this influence, we must be modest and cautious in the pronouncing of positive opinions on the subject of beauty.

§ 12. And what caution it renders necessary in the examination of them.

For every one of us has peculiar sources of enjoyment necessarily opened to him in certain scenes and things, sources which are sealed to others, and we must be wary on the one hand, of confounding these in ourselves with ultimate conclusions of taste, and so forcing them upon all as authoritative, and on the other of supposing that the enjoyments of others which we cannot share are shallow or unwarrantable, because incommunicable. I fear, for instance, that in the former portion of this work I may have attributed too much community and authority to certain affec-

tions of my own for scenery inducing emotions of wild, impetuous, and enthusiastic characters, and too little to those which I perceive in others for things peaceful, humble, meditative, and solemn. So also between youth and age there will be found differences of seeking, which are not wrong, nor of false choice in either, but of different temperament, the youth sympathizing more with the gladness, fulness, and magnificence of things, and the gray hairs with their completion, sufficiency and repose. And so, neither condemning the delights of others, nor altogether distrustful of our own, we must advance, as we live on, from what is brilliant to what is pure, and from what is promised to what is fulfilled, and from what is our strength to what is our crown, only observing in all things how that which is indeed wrong, and to be cut up from the root, is dislike, and not affection. For by the very nature of these beautiful qualities, which I have defined to be the signature of God upon his works, it is evident that in whatever we altogether dislike, we see not all; that the keenness of our vision is to be tested by the expansiveness of our love, and that as far as the influence of association has voice in the question, though it is indeed possible that the inevitable painfulness of an object, for which we can render no sufficient reason, may be owing to its recalling of a sorrow, it is more probably dependent on its accusation of a crime.

CHAPTER V.

OF TYPICAL BEAUTY :—FIRST, OF INFINITY, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE INCOMPREHENSIBILITY.

THE subject being now in some measure cleared of embarrassment, let us briefly distinguish those qualities or types on whose combination is dependent the power of mere material loveliness. I pretend neither to enumerate nor perceive them all, for it may be generally observed that whatever good there may be, desirable by man, more especially good belonging to his moral nature, there will be a corresponding agreeableness in whatever external object reminds him of such good, whether it remind him by arbitrary association or by typical resemblance, and that the infinite ways, whether by reason or experience discoverable, by which matter in some sort may remind us of moral perfections, are hardly within any reasonable limits to be explained, if even by any single mind they might all be traced. Yet certain palpable and powerful modes there are, by observing which, we may come at such general conclusions on the subject as may be practically useful, and more than these I shall not attempt to obtain.

§ 1. Impossibility of adequately treating the subject.

And first, I would ask of the reader to enter upon the subject with me, as far as may be, as a little child, ridding himself of all conventional and authoritative thoughts, and especially of such associations as arise from his respect for Pagan art, or which are in any way traceable to classical readings. I recollect that Mr. Alison traces his first perceptions of beauty in external nature to this most corrupt source, thus betraying so total and singular a want of natural sensibility as may well excuse the deficiencies of his following arguments. For there was never yet the child of any promise (so far as the theoretic faculties are concerned) but awaked to the sense of beauty with the first gleam of reason; and I suppose there are few, among those who love nature otherwise than by profession and at second-hand, who look not back

§ 2. With what simplicity of feeling to be approached.

to their youngest and least-learned days as those of the most intense, superstitious, insatiable, and beatific perception of her splendors. And the bitter decline of this glorious feeling, though many note it not, partly owing to the cares and weight of manhood, which leave them not the time nor the liberty to look for their lost treasure, and partly to the human and divine affections which are appointed to take its place, yet has formed the subject not indeed of lamentation, but of holy thankfulness for the witness it bears to the immortal origin and end of our nature, to one whose authority is almost without appeal in all questions relating to the influence of external things upon the pure human soul.

> "Heaven lies about us in our infancy,—
> Shades of the prison-house begin to close
> Upon the growing boy.
> But he beholds the light, and whence it flows
> He sees it in his joy.
> The youth, who daily farther from the east
> Must travel, still is nature's priest,
> And by the vision splendid
> Is on his way attended.
> At length the Man perceives it die away
> And fade into the light of common day."

And if it were possible for us to recollect all the unaccountable and happy instincts of the careless time, and to reason upon them with the maturer judgment, we might arrive at more rapid and right results than either the philosophy or the sophisticated practice of art have yet attained. But we lose the perceptions before we are capable of methodizing or comparing them.

One, however, of these child instincts, I believe that few forget; the emotion, namely, caused by all open ground, or lines of any spacious kind against the sky, behind which there might be conceived the sea. It is an emotion more pure than that caused by the sea itself, for I recollect distinctly running down behind the banks of a high beach to get their land line cutting against the sky, and receiving a more strange delight from this than from the sight of the ocean: I am not sure that this feeling is common to all children, (or would be common if they were all in circumstances admitting it), but I have ascertained it to be frequent among

§ 2. The child instinct respecting space.

those who possess the most vivid sensibilities for nature; and I am certain that the modification of it, which belongs to our after years, is common to all, the love, namely, of a light distance appearing over a comparatively dark horizon. This I have tested too frequently to be mistaken, by offering to indifferent spectators forms of equal abstract beauty in half tint, relieved, the one against dark sky, the other against a bright distance. The preference is invariably given to the latter, and it is very certain that this preference arises not from any supposition of there being greater truth in this than the other, for the same preference is unhesitatingly accorded to the same effect in nature herself. Whatever beauty there may result from effects of light on foreground objects, from the dew of the grass, the flash of the cascade, the glitter of the birch trunk, or the fair daylight hues of darker things, (and joyfulness there is in all of them), there is yet a light which the eye invariably seeks with a deeper feeling of the beautiful, the light of the declining or breaking day, and the flakes of scarlet cloud burning like watch-fires in the green sky of the horizon; a deeper feeling, I say, not perhaps more acute, but having more of spiritual hope and longing, less of animal and present life, more manifest, invariably, in those of more serious and determined mind, (I use the word serious, not as being opposed to cheerful, but to trivial and volatile;) but, I think, marked and unfailing even in those of the least thoughtful dispositions. I am willing to let it rest on the determination of every reader, whether the pleasure which he has received from these effects of calm and luminous distance be not the most singular and memorable of which he has been conscious, whether all that is dazzling in color, perfect in form, gladdening in expression, be not of evanescent and shallow appealing, when compared with the still small voice of the level twilight behind purple hills, or the scarlet arch of dawn over the dark, troublous-edged sea.

§ 4. Continued in after life.

Let us try to discover that which effects of this kind possess or suggest, peculiar to themselves, and which other effects of light and color possess not. There *must* be something in them of a peculiar character, and that, whatever it be, must be one of the primal and most earnest motives of beauty to human sensation.

§ 5. Whereto this instinct is traceable.

Do they show finer characters of form than can be developed by the broader daylight? Not so; for their power is almost independent of the forms they assume or display; it matters little whether the bright clouds be simple or manifold, whether the mountain line be subdued or majestic, the fairer forms of earthly things are by them subdued and disguised, the round and muscular growth of the forest trunks is sunk into skeleton lines of quiet shade, the purple clefts of the hill-side are labyrinthed in the darkness, the orbed spring and whirling wave of the torrent have given place to a white, ghastly, interrupted gleaming. Have they more perfection or fulness of color? Not so; for their effect is oftentimes deeper when their hues are dim, than when they are blazoned with crimson and pale gold; and assuredly, in the blue of the rainy sky, in the many tints of morning flowers, in the sunlight on summer foliage and field, there are more sources of mere sensual color-pleasure than in the single streak of wan and dying light. It is not then by nobler form, it is not by positiveness of hue, it is not by intensity of light, (for the sun itself at noonday is effectless upon the feelings,) that this strange distant space possesses its attractive power. But there is one thing that it has, or suggests, which no other object of sight suggests in equal degree, and that is,—Infinity. It is of all visible things the least material, the least finite, the farthest withdrawn from the earth prison-house, the most typical of the nature of God, the most suggestive of the glory of his dwelling-place. For the sky of night, though we may know it boundless, is dark, it is a studded vault, a roof that seems to shut us in and down, but the bright distance has no limit, we feel its infinity, as we rejoice in its purity of light.

§ 6. Infinity how necessary in art.

Now not only is this expression of infinity in distance most precious wherever we find it, however solitary it may be, and however unassisted by other forms and kinds of beauty, but it is of that value that no such other forms will altogether recompense us for its loss; and much as I dread the enunciation of anything that may seem like a conventional rule, I have no hesitation in asserting, that no work of any art, in which this expression of infinity is possible, can be perfect, or supremely elevated without it, and that, in proportion to its presence, it will exalt and render impressive

even the most tame and trivial themes. And I think if there be any one grand division, by which it is at all possible to set the productions of painting, so far as their mere plan or system is concerned, on our right and left hands, it is this of light and dark background, of heaven light or of object light. For I know not any truly great painter of any time, who manifests not the most intense pleasure in the luminous space of his backgrounds, or who ever sacrifices this pleasure where the nature of his subject admits of its attainment, as on the other hand I know not that the habitual use of dark backgrounds can be shown as having ever been co-existent with pure or high feeling, and, except in the case of Rembrandt, (and then under peculiar circumstances only,) with any high power of intellect. It is however necessary carefully to observe the following modifications of this broad principle.

§ 7. Conditions of its necessity.

The absolute necessity, for such indeed I consider it, is of no more than such a mere luminous distant point as may give to the feelings a species of escape from all the finite objects about them. There is a spectral etching of Rembrandt, a presentation of Christ in the temple, where the figure of a robed priest stands glaring by its gems out of the gloom, holding a crosier. Behind it there is a subdued window light seen in the opening between two columns, without which the impressiveness of the whole subject would, I think, be incalculably brought down. I cannot tell whether I am at present allowing too much weight to my own fancies and predilections, but without so much escape into the outer air and open heaven as this, I can take permanent pleasure in no picture.

§ 8. And connected analogies.

And I think I am supported in this feeling by the unanimous practice, if not the confessed opinion, of all artists. The painter of portrait is unhappy without his conventional white stroke under the sleeve, or beside the arm-chair; the painter of interiors feels like a caged bird, unless he can throw a window open, or set the door ajar; the landscapist dares not lose himself in forest without a gleam of light under its farthest branches, nor ventures out in rain, unless he may somewhere pierce to a better promise in the distance, or cling to some closing gap of variable blue above;—escape, hope, infinity, by whatever conventional-

ism sought, the desire is the same in all, the instinct constant, it is no mere point of light that is wanted in the etching of Rembrandt above instanced, a gleam of armor or fold of temple curtain would have been utterly valueless, neither is it liberty, for though we cut down hedges and level hills, and give what waste and plain we choose, on the right hand and the left, it is all comfortless and undesired, so long as we cleave not a way of escape forward; and however narrow and thorny and difficult the nearer path, it matters not, so only that the clouds open for us at its close. Neither will any amount of beauty in nearer form, make us content to stay with it, so long as we are shut down to that alone, nor is any form so cold or so hurtful but that we may look upon it with kindness, so only that it rise against the infinite hope of light beyond. The reader can follow out the analogies of this unassisted.

§ 9. How the dignity of treatment is proportioned to the expression of infinity.

But although this narrow portal of escape be all that is absolutely necessary, I think that the dignity of the painting increases with the extent and amount of the expression. With the earlier and mightier painters of Italy, the practice is commonly to leave their distance of pure and open sky, of such simplicity, that it in nowise shall interfere with or draw the attention from the interest of the figures, and of such purity, that especially towards the horizon, it shall be in the highest degree expressive of the infinite space of heaven. I do not mean to say that they did this with any occult or metaphysical motives. They did it, I think, with the child-like, unpretending simplicity of all earnest men; they did what they loved and felt; they sought what the heart naturally seeks, and gave what it most gratefully receives; and I look to them as in all points of principle (not, observe, of knowledge or empirical attainment) as the most irrefragable authorities, precisely on account of the child-like innocence, which never deemed itself authoritative, but acted upon desire, and not upon dicta, and sought for sympathy, not for admiration.

And so we find the same simple and sweet treatment, the open sky, the tender, unpretending, horizontal white clouds, the far winding and abundant landscape, in Giotto, Taddeo, Gaddi, Laurati, Angelico, Benozzo, Ghirlandajo, Francia, Peru-

gino, and the young Raffaelle, the first symptom of conventionality appearing in Perugino, who, though with intense feeling of light and color he carried the glory of his luminous distance far beyond all his predecessors, began at the same time to use a somewhat morbid relief of his figures against the upper sky. Thus in the Assumption of the Florentine Academy, in that of l'Annunziata; and of the Gallery of Bologna, in all which pictures the lower portions are incomparably the finest, owing to the light distance behind the heads. Raffaelle, in his fall, betrayed the faith he had received from his father and his master, and substituted for the radiant sky of the Madonna del Cardellino, the chamber-wall of the Madonna della Sediola—and the brown wainscot of the Baldacchino. Yet it is curious to observe how much of the dignity even of his later pictures, depends on such portions as the green light of the lake, and sky behind the rocks, in the St. John of the tribune, and how the repainted distortion of the Madonna dell' Impannata, is redeemed into something like elevated character, merely by the light of the linen window from which it takes its name.

§ 10. Examples among the Southern schools.

That which by the Florentines was done in pure simplicity of heart, was done by the Venetians with intense love of the color and splendor of the sky itself, even to the frequent sacrificing of their subject to the passion of its distance. In Carpaccio, John Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, Veronese, and Tintoret, the preciousness of the luminous sky, so far as it might be at all consistent with their subject, is nearly constant; abandoned altogether in portraiture only, seldom even there, and never with advantage. Titian and Veronese, who had less exalted feeling than the others, affording a few instances of exception, the latter overpowering his silvery distances with foreground splendor, the other sometimes sacrificing them to a luscious fulness of color, as in the Flagellation in the Louvre, by a comparison of which with the unequalled majesty of the Entombment opposite, the whole power and applicability of the general principle may at once be tested.

§ 11. Among the Venetians.

But of the value of this mode of treatment there is a farther and more convincing proof than its adoption either by the inno-

cence of the Florentine or the ardor of the Venetian, namely, that when retained or imitated from them by the landscape painters of the seventeenth century, when appearing in isolation from all other good, among the weaknesses and paltrinesses of Claude, the mannerisms of Gaspar, and the caricatures and brutalities of Salvator, it yet redeems and upholds all three, conquers all foulness by its purity, vindicates all folly by its dignity, and puts an uncomprehended power of permanent address to the human heart, upon the lips of the senseless and the profane.*

§ 12. Among the painters of landscape.

Now, although I doubt not that the general value of this treatment will be acknowledged by all lovers of art, it is not certain that the point to prove which I have brought it forward, will be as readily conceded, namely, the inherent power of all representations of infinity over the human heart; for there are, indeed, countless associations of pure and religious kind, which combine with each other to enhance the impression, when presented in this particular form, whose power I neither deny nor am careful to distinguish, seeing that they all tend to the same Divine point, and have reference to heavenly hopes; delights they are in seeing the narrow, black, miserable earth fairly compared with the bright firmament, reachings forward unto the things that are

§ 13. Other modes in which the power of infinity is felt.

* In one of the smaller rooms of the Pitti palace, over the door, is a temptation of St. Anthony, by Salvator, wherein such power as the artist possessed is fully manifested, with little, comparatively, that is offensive. It is a vigorous and ghastly thought, in that kind of horror which is dependent on scenic effect, perhaps unrivalled, and I shall have occasion to refer to it again in speaking of the powers of imagination. I allude to it here, because the sky of the distance affords a remarkable instance of the power of light at present under discussion. It is formed of flakes of black cloud, with rents and openings of intense and lurid green, and at least half of the impressiveness of the picture depends on these openings. Close them, make the sky one mass of gloom, and the spectre will be awful no longer. It owes to the light of the distance both its size and its spirituality. The time would fail me if I were to name the tenth part of the pictures which occur to me, whose vulgarity is redeemed by this circumstance alone, and yet let not the artist trust to such morbid and conventional use of it as may be seen in the common blue and yellow effectism of the present day. Of the value of moderation and simplicity in the use of this, as of all other sources of pleasurable emotion, I shall presently have occasion to speak farther.

before, and joyfulness in the apparent though unreachable nearness and promise of them. But there are other modes in which infinity may be represented, which are confused by no associations of the kind, and which would, as being in mere matter, appear trivial and mean, but for their incalculable influence on the forms of all that we feel to be beautiful. The first of these is the curvature of lines and surfaces, wherein it at first appears futile to insist upon any resemblance or suggestion of infinity, since there is certainly in our ordinary contemplation of it, no sensation of the kind. But I have repeated again and again that the ideas of beauty are instinctive, and that it is only upon consideration, and even then in doubtful and disputable way, that they appear in their typical character; neither do I intend at all to insist upon the particular meaning which they appear to myself to bear, but merely on their actual and demonstrable agreeableness, so that, in the present case, while I assert positively, and have no fear of being able to prove, that a curve of any kind is more beautiful than a right line, I leave it to the reader to accept or not, as he pleases, that reason of its agreeableness, which is the only one that I can at all trace, namely, that every curve divides itself infinitely by its changes of direction.

§ 14. The beauty of curvature.

That all forms of acknowledged beauty are composed exclusively of curves will, I believe, be at once allowed; but that which there will be need more especially to prove, is the subtilty and constancy of curvature in all natural forms whatsoever. I believe that, except in crystals, in certain mountain forms admitted for the sake of sublimity or contrast, (as in the slope of debris,) in rays of light, in the levels of calm water and alluvial land, and in some few organic developments, there are no lines nor surfaces of nature without curvature, though as we before saw in clouds, more especially in their under lines towards the horizon, and in vast and extended plains, right lines are often suggested which are not actual. Without these we could not be sensible of the value of the contrasting curves, and while, therefore, for the most part, the eye is fed in natural forms with a grace of curvature which no hand nor instrument can follow, other means are provided to give beauty to those surfaces which are admitted for

§ 15. How constant in external nature.

contrast, as in water by its reflection of the gradations which it possesses not itself. In freshly-broken ground, which nature has not yet had time to model, in quarries and pits which are none of her cutting, in those convulsions and evidences of convulsion, of whose influence on ideal landscape I shall presently have occasion to speak, and generally in all ruin and disease, and interference of one order of being with another, (as in the cattle line of park trees,) the curves vanish, and violently opposed or broken and unmeaning lines take their place.

What curvature is to lines, gradation is to shades and colors. It is *there* infinity, and divides them into an infinite number of degrees. Absolutely, without gradation no natural surface can possibly be, except under circumstances of so rare conjunction as to amount to a lusus naturæ; for we have seen that few surfaces are without curvature, and every curved surface must be gradated by the nature of light, which is most intense when it impinges at the highest angle, and for the gradation of the few plane surfaces that exist, means are provided in local color, aerial perspective, reflected lights, etc., from which it is but barely conceivable that they should ever escape. Hence for instances of the complete absence of gradation we must look to man's work, or to his disease and decrepitude. Compare the gradated colors of the rainbow with the stripes of a target, and the gradual concentration of the youthful blood in the cheek with an abrupt patch of rouge, or with the sharply drawn veining of old age.

§ 16. The beauty of gradation.

Gradation is so inseparable a quality of all natural shade and color that the eye refuses in art to understand anything as either, which appears without it, while on the other hand nearly all the gradations of nature are so subtile and between degrees of tint so slightly separated, that no human hand can in any wise equal, or do anything more than suggest the idea of them. In proportion to the space over which gradation extends, and to its invisible subtilty, is its grandeur, and in proportion to its narrow limits and violent degrees, its vulgarity. In Correggio, it is morbid and vulgar in spite of its refinement of execution, because the eye is drawn to it, and it is made the most observable and characteristic part of the picture; whereas natural gradation is forever escaping

§ 17. How found in Nature.

observation to that degree that the greater part of artists in working from nature see it not, (except in certain of its marked developments,) but either lay down such continuous lines and colors, as are both disagreeable and impossible, or, receiving the necessity of gradation as a principle instead of a fact, use it in violently exaggerated measure, and so lose both the dignity of their own work, and by the constant dwelling of their eyes upon exaggerations, their sensibility to that of the natural forms. So that we find the majority of painters divided between the two evil extremes of insufficiency and affectation, and only a few of the greatest men capable of making gradation constant and yet extended over enormous spaces and within degrees of narrow difference, as in the body of a high light.

From the necessity of gradation results what is commonly given as a rule of art, though its authority as a rule obtains only from its being a fact of nature, that the extremes of high light and pure color, can exist only in points. The common rules respecting sixths and eighths, held concerning light and shade, are entirely absurd and conventional; according to the subject and the effect of light, the greater part of the picture will be or ought to be light or dark; but that principle which is not conventional, is that of all light, however high, there is some part that is higher than the rest, and that of all color, however pure, there is some part that is purer than the rest, and that generally of all shade, however deep, there is some part deeper than the rest, though this last fact is frequently sacrificed in art, owing to the narrowness of its means. But on the right gradation or focussing of light and color depends in great measure, the value of both. Of this, I have spoken sufficiently in pointing out the singular constancy of it in the works of Turner. Part II. Sect. II. Chap. II. § 17. And it is generally to be observed that even raw and valueless color, if rightly and subtilely gradated will in some measure stand for light, and that the most transparent and perfect hue will be in some measure unsatisfactory, if entirely unvaried. I believe the early skies of Raffaelle owe their luminousness more to their untraceable and subtile gradation than to inherent quality of hue.

§ 18. How necessary in Art.

Such are the expressions of infinity which we find in crea-

tion, of which the importance is to be estimated, rather by their frequency than their distinctness. Let, however, the reader bear constantly in mind that I insist not on his accepting any interpretation of mine, but only on his dwelling so long on those objects, which he perceives to be beautiful, as to determine whether the qualities to which I trace their beauty, be necessarily there or no. Farther expressions of infinity there are in the mystery of nature, and in some measure in her vastness, but these are dependent on our own imperfections, and therefore, though they produce sublimity, they are unconnected with beauty. For that which we foolishly call vastness is, rightly considered, not more wonderful, not more impressive, than that which we insolently call littleness, and the infinity of God is not mysterious, it is only unfathomable, not concealed, but incomprehensible: it is a clear infinity, the darkness of the pure unsearchable sea.

§ 19. Infinity not rightly implied by vastness.

CHAPTER VI.

OF UNITY, OR THE TYPE OF THE DIVINE COMPREHENSIVENESS.

"ALL things," says Hooker, "(God only excepted,) besides the nature which they have in themselves, receive externally some perfection from other things." Hence the appearance of separation or isolation in anything, and of self-dependence, is an appearance of imperfection: and all appearances of connection and brotherhood are pleasant and right, both as significative of perfection in the things united, and as typical of that Unity which we attribute to God, and of which our true conception is rightly explained and limited by Dr. Brown in his XCII. lecture; that Unity which consists not in his own singleness or separation, but in the necessity of his inherence in all things that be, without which no creature of any kind could hold existence for a moment. Which necessity of Divine essence I think it better to speak of as comprehensiveness, than as unity, because unity is often understood in the sense of oneness or singleness, instead of universality, whereas the only Unity which by any means can become grateful or an object of hope to men, and whose types therefore in material things can be beautiful, is that on which turned the last words and prayer of Christ before his crossing of the Kidron brook. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee."

§1. The general conception of divine Unity.

And so there is not any matter, nor any spirit, nor any creature, but it is capable of an unity of some kind with other creatures, and in that unity is its perfection and theirs, and a pleasure also for the beholding of all other creatures that can behold. So the unity of spirits is partly in their sympathy, and partly in their giving and taking, and always in their love; and these are their delight

§2. The glory of all things is their Unity.

and their strength, for their strength is in their co-working and army fellowship, and their delight is in the giving and receiving of alternate and perpetual currents of good, their inseparable dependency on each other's being, and their essential and perfect depending on their Creator's: and so the unity of earthly creatures is their power and their peace, not like the dead and cold peace of undisturbed stones and solitary mountains, but the living peace of trust, and the living power of support, of hands that hold each other and are still: and so the unity of matter is, in its noblest form, the organization of it which builds it up into temples for the spirit, and in its lower form, the sweet and strange affinity, which gives to it the glory of its orderly elements, and the fair variety of change and assimilation that turns the dust into the crystal, and separates the waters that be above the firmament from the waters that be beneath, and in its lowest form; it is the working and walking and clinging together that gives their power to the winds, and its syllables and soundings to the air, and their weight to the waves, and their burning to the sunbeams, and their stability to the mountains, and to every creature whatsoever operation is for its glory and for others good.

Now of that which is thus necessary to the perfection of all things, all appearance, sign, type, or suggestion must be beautiful, in whatever matter it may appear. And so to the perfection of beauty in lines, or colors, or forms, or masses, or multitudes, the appearance of some species of unity is in the most determined sense of the word essential.

But of the appearances of unity, as of unity itself, there are several kinds which it will be found hereafter convenient to consider separately. Thus there is the unity of different and separate things, subjected to one and the same influence, which may be called subjectional unity, and this is the unity of the clouds, as they are driven by the parallel winds, or as they are ordered by the electric currents, and this the unity of the sea waves, and this of the bending and undulation of the forest masses; and in creatures capable of will it is the unity of will or of inspiration. And there is unity of origin, which we may call original unity, which is of things arising from one spring and

§ 3. The several kinds of unity. Subjectional. Original. Of sequence, and of membership.

source, and speaking always of this their brotherhood, and this in matter is the unity of the branches of the trees, and of the petals and starry rays of flowers, and of the beams of light, and in spiritual creatures it is their filial relation to Him from whom they have their being. And there is unity of sequence, which is that of things that form links in chains, and steps in ascent, and stages in journeys, and this, in matter, is the unity of communicable forces in their continuance from one thing to another, and it is the passing upwards and downwards of beneficent effects among all things, and it is the melody of sounds, and the beauty of continuous lines, and the orderly succession of motions and times. And in spiritual creatures it is their own constant building up by true knowledge and continuous reasoning to higher perfection, and the singleness and straightforwardness of their tendencies to more complete communion with God. And there is the unity of membership, which we may call essential unity, which is the unity of things separately imperfect into a perfect whole, and this is the great unity of which other unities are but parts and means, it is in matter the harmony of sounds and consistency of bodies, and among spiritual creatures, their love and happiness and very life in God.

§ 4. Unity of membership. How secured.

Now of the nature of this last kind of unity, the most important whether in moral or in those material things with which we are at present concerned, there is this necessary to be observed, that it cannot exist between things similar to each other. Two or more equal and like things cannot be members one of another, nor can they form one, or a whole thing. Two they must remain, both in nature and in our conception, so long as they remain alike, unless they are united by a third different from both. Thus the arms, which are like each other, remain two arms in our conception. They could not be united by a third arm, they must be united by something which is not an arm, and which, imperfect without them as they without it, shall form one perfect body; nor is unity even thus accomplished, without a difference and opposition of direction in the setting on of the like members. Therefore among all things which are to have unity of membership one with another, there must be difference or variety; and though it is possible that many like things may be

made members of one body, yet it is remarkable that this structure appears characteristic of the lower creatures, rather than the higher, as the many legs of the caterpillar, and the many arms and suckers of the radiata, and that, as we rise in order of being, the number of similar members becomes less, and their structure commonly seems based on the principle of the unity of two things by a third, as Plato has it in the Timæus, § II.

§ 5. Variety. Why required.

Hence, out of the necessity of unity, arises that of variety, a necessity often more vividly, though never so deeply felt, because lying at the surfaces of things, and assisted by an influential principle of our nature, the love of change, and the power of contrast. But it is a mistake which has led to many unfortunate results, in matters respecting art, to insist on any inherent agreeableness of variety, without reference to a farther end. For it is not even true that variety as such, and in its highest degree, is beautiful. A patched garment of many colors is by no means so agreeable as one of a single and continuous hue; the splendid colors of many birds are eminently painful from their violent separation and inordinate variety, while the pure and colorless swan is, under certain circumstances, the most beautiful of all feathered creatures.* A forest of all manner of trees is poor, if not disagreeable in effect,† a mass of one species of tree is sublime. It is therefore only harmonious and chordal variety, that variety which is necessary to secure and extend unity, (for the greater the number of objects, which by their differences become members of one another, the more extended and sublime is their unity,) which is rightly agreeable, and so I name not variety as essential to beauty, because it is only so in a secondary and casual sense.‡

* Compare Chap. ix. § 5, note.

† Spenser's various forest is the Forest of Error.

‡ It must be matter of no small wonderment to practical men to observe how grossly the nature and connection of unity and variety have been misunderstood and misstated, by those writers upon taste, who have been guided by no experience of art; most singularly perhaps by Mr. Alison, who, confounding unity with uniformity, and leading his readers through thirty pages of discussion respecting uniformity and variety, the intelligibility of which is not by any means increased by his supposing uniformity to be capable of existence in single things; at last substitutes for these two terms,

Of the love of change as a principle of human nature, and the pleasantness of variety resulting from it, something has already been said, (Ch. IV. § 4,) only as there I was opposing the idea that our being familiar with objects was the cause of our delight in them, so here, I have to oppose the contrary position, that their strangeness is the cause of it. For neither familiarity nor strangeness have more operation on, or connection with, impressions of one sense than of another, and they have less power over the impressions of sense generally, than over the intellect in its joyful accepting of fresh knowledge, and dull contemplation of that it has long possessed. Only in their operation on the senses they act contrarily at different times, as for instance the newness of a dress or of some kind of unaccustomed food may make it for a time delightful, but as the novelty passes away, so also may the delight, yielding to disgust or indifference, which in their turn, as custom begins to operate, may pass into affection and craving, and that which was first a luxury, and then a matter of indifference, becomes a necessity :* whereas in subjects of the intellect, the chief delight they convey is dependent upon their being newly and vividly comprehended, and as they become subjects of contemplation they lose their value, and become tasteless and unregarded, except as instruments for the reaching of others, only that though they sink down into the shadowy, effectless, heap of things indifferent, which we pack, and crush down, and stand upon, to reach things new, they sparkle afresh at intervals as we stir them by throwing a new stone into the heap, and letting the newly admitted lights play upon them. And both in subjects of the intellect and the senses it is to be remembered, that the love of change is a weakness and imperfection of our nature, and implies in it the state of probation, and that it is to teach us that things about us here are not meant for our continual possession or satisfaction, that ever such passion of change was put

§ 6. Change, and its influence on beauty.

sufficiently contradictory already, those of similarity and dissimilarity, the reconciliation of which opposites in one thing we must, I believe, leave Mr. Alison to accomplish.

* *Καὶ τὸ ταὐτὰ πράττειν πολλάκις ἡδύ·—τὸ γὰρ σύνηθες ἡδὺ ἦν· καὶ τὸ μεταβάλλειν ἡδύ· εἰς φύσιν γὰρ γίγνεται μεταβάλλειν.*—Arist. Rhet. I. II. 20.

in us as that "custom lies upon us with a weight, heavy as frost, and deep almost as life," and only such weak back and baby grasp given to our intellect as that "the best things we do are painful, and the exercise of them grievous, being continued without intermission, so as in those very actions whereby we are especially perfected in this life we are not able to persist."

§ 7. The love of change. How morbid and evil.

And so it will be found that they are the weakest-minded and the hardest-hearted men that most love variety and change, for the weakest-minded are those who both wonder most at things new, and digest worst things old, in so far that everything they have lies rusty, and loses lustre for want of use; neither do they make any stir among their possessions, nor look over them to see what may be made of them, nor keep any great store, nor are householders with storehouses of things new and old, but they catch at the new-fashioned garments, and let the moth and thief look after the rest; and the hardest-hearted men are those that least feel the endearing and binding power of custom, and hold on by no cords of affection to any shore, but drive with the waves that cast up mire and dirt. And certainly it is not to be held that the perception of beauty and desire of it, are greatest in the hardest heart and weakest brain; but the love of variety is so, and therefore variety can be no cause of the beautiful, except, as I have said, when it is necessary for the perception of unity, neither is there any better test of that which is indeed beautiful than its surviving or annihilating the love of change; and this is a test which the best judges of art have need frequently to use; and the wisest of them will use it always, for there is much in art that surprises by its brilliancy, or attracts by its singularity, that can hardly but by course of time, though assuredly it will by course of time, be winnowed away from the right and real beauty whose retentive power is forever on the increase, a bread of the soul for which the hunger is continual.

§ 8. The conducing of variety towards unity of subjection.

Receiving, therefore, variety only as that which accomplishes unity, or makes it perceived, its operation is found to be very precious, both in that which I have called unity of subjection, and unity of sequence, as well as in unity of membership; for although things in all respects the same may, indeed, be subject-

ed to one influence, yet the power of the influence, and their obedience to it, is best seen by varied operation of it on their individual differences, as in clouds and waves there is a glorious unity of rolling, wrought out by the wild and wonderful differences of their absolute forms, which, if taken away, would leave in them only multitudinous and petty repetition, instead of the majestic oneness of shared passion. And so in the waves and clouds of human multitude when they are filled with one thought, as we find frequently in the works of the early Italian men of earnest purpose, who despising, or happily ignorant of, the sophistications of theories, and the proprieties of composition, indicated by perfect similarity of action and gesture on the one hand, and by the infinite and truthful variation of expression on the other, the most sublime strength because the most absorbing unity, of multitudinous passion that ever human heart conceived. Hence, in the cloister of St. Mark's, the intense, fixed, statue-like silence of ineffable adoration upon the spirits in prison at the feet of Christ, side by side, the hands lifted, and the knees bowed, and the lips trembling together;* and in St. Domenico of Fiesole,† that whirlwind rush of the Angels and the redeemed souls round about him at his resurrection, so that we hear the blast of the horizontal trumpets mixed with the dying clangor of their ingathered wings. The same great feeling occurs throughout the works of the serious men, though most intensely in Angelico, and it is well to compare with it the vileness and falseness of all that succeeded, when men had begun to bring to the cross foot their systems instead of their sorrow. Take as the most marked and degraded instance, perhaps, to be anywhere found, Bronzino's treatment of the same subject (Christ visiting the spirits in prison,) in the picture now in the

* Fra Angelico's fresco, in a cell of the upper cloister. He treated the subject frequently. Another characteristic example occurs in the Vita di Christo of the Academy, a series now unfortunately destroyed by the picture cleaners. Simon Memmi in Santa Maria Novella (Chapelle des Espagnols) has given another very beautiful instance. In Giotto the principle is universal, though his multitudes are somewhat more dramatically and powerfully varied in gesture than Angelico's. In Mino da Fiesole's altar-piece in the church of St. Ambrogiot at Florence, close by Cosimo Rosselli's fresco, there is a beautiful example in marble.

† The Predella of the picture behind the altar.

Tuscan room of the Uffizii, which, vile as it is in color, vacant in invention, void in light and shade, a heap of cumbrous nothingnesses, and sickening offensivenesses, is of all its voids most void in this, that the academy models therein huddled together at the bottom, show not so much unity or community of attention to the academy model with the flag in its hand above, as a street crowd would be to a fresh-staged charlatan. Some *point* to the God who has burst the gates of death, as if the rest were incapable of distinguishing him for themselves, and others turn their backs upon him, to show their unagitated faces to the spectator.

In unity of sequence, the effect of variety is best exemplified by the melodies of music, wherein by the differences of the notes, they are connected with each other in certain pleasant relations. This connection taking place in quantities is proportion, respecting which certain general principles must be noted, as the subject is one open to many errors, and obscurely treated of by writers on art.

§ 9. And towards unity of sequence.

Proportion is of two distinct kinds. Apparent: when it takes place between qualities for the sake of connection only, without any ultimate object or casual necessity; and constructive: when it has reference to some function to be discharged by the quantities, depending on their proportion. From the confusion of these two kinds of proportion have arisen the greater part of the erroneous conceptions of the influence of either.

§ 10. The nature of proportion. 1st, of apparent proportion.

Apparent proportion, or the sensible relation of quantities, is one of the most important means of obtaining unity between things which otherwise must have remained distinct in similarity, and as it may consist with every other kind of unity, and persist when every other means of it fails, it may be considered as lying at the root of most of our impressions of the beautiful. There is no sense of rightness, or wrongness connected with it, no sense of utility, propriety, or expediency. These ideas enter only where the proportion of quantities has reference to some function to be performed by them. It cannot be asserted that it is right or that it is wrong that A should be to B, as B to C; unless A, B, and C have some desirable operation dependent on that relation. But nevertheless it may be highly agreeable to

the eye that A, B, and C, if visible things, should have visible connection of ratio, even though nothing be accomplished by such connection. On the other hand, constructive proportion, or the adaptation of quantities to functions, is agreeable not to the eye, but to the mind, which is cognizant of the function to be performed. Thus the pleasantness or rightness of the proportions of a column depends not on the mere relation of diameter and height, (which is not proportion at all, for proportion is between three terms at least,) but on three other involved terms, the strength of materials, the weight to be borne, and the scale of the building. The proportions of a wooden column are wrong in a stone one, and of a small building wrong in a large one,* and this owing solely to mechanical considerations, which

* It seems never to have been rightly understood, even by the more intelligent among our architects, that proportion is in any way connected with positive size; it seems to be held among them that a small building may be expanded to a large one merely by proportionally expanding all its parts: and that the harmony will be equally agreeable on whatever scale it be rendered. Now this is true of apparent proportion, but utterly false of constructive; and, as much of the value of architectural proportion is constructive, the error is often productive of the most painful results. It may be best illustrated by observing the conditions of proportion in animals. Many persons have thoughtlessly claimed admiration for the strength—supposed gigantic—of insects and smaller animals; because capable of lifting weights, leaping distances, and surmounting obstacles, of proportion apparently overwhelming. Thus the Formica Herculanea will lift in its mouth, and brandish like a baton, sticks thicker than itself and six times its length, all the while scrambling over crags of about the proportionate height of the Cliffs of Dover, three or four in a minute. There is nothing extraordinary in this, nor any exertion of strength necessarily greater than human, in proportion to the size of the body. For it is evident that if the size and strength of any creature be expanded or diminished in proportion to each other, the distance through which it can leap, the time it can maintain exertion, or any other third term resultant, remains constant; that is, diminish weight of powder and of ball proportionately, and the distance carried is constant or nearly so. Thus, a grasshopper, a man, and a giant 100 feet high, supposing their muscular strength equally proportioned to their size, can or could all leap, not proportionate distance, but the same or nearly the same distance—say, four feet the grasshopper, or forty-eight times his length; six feet the man or his length exactly; ten feet the giant or the tenth of his length. Hence all small animals can, *cæteris paribus*, perform feats of strength and agility, exactly so much greater than those to be executed by large ones, as the animals themselves are smaller; and to enable an elephant

have no more to do with ideas of beauty, than the relation between the arms of a lever, adapted to the raising of a given weight; and yet it is highly agreeable to perceive that such con-

to leap like a grasshopper, he must be endowed with strength a million times greater in *proportion* to his size. Now the consequence of this general mechanical law is, that as we increase the scale of animals, their means of power, whether muscles of motion or bones of support, must be increased in a more than proportionate degree, or they become utterly unwieldy, and incapable of motion;—and there is a limit to this increase of strength. If the elephant had legs as long as a spider's, no combination of animal matter that could be hide-bound would have strength enough to move them: to support the megatherium, we must have a humerus a foot in diameter, though perhaps not more than two feet long, and that in a vertical position under him, while the gnat can hang on the window frame, and poise himself to sting, in the middle of crooked stilts like threads; stretched out to ten times the breadth of his body on each side. Increase the size of the megatherium a little more, and no phosphate of lime will bear him; he would crush his own legs to powder. (Compare Sir Charles Bell, "Bridgewater Treatise on the Hand," p. 296, and the note.) Hence there is not only a limit to the size of animals, in the conditions of matter, but to their activity also, the largest being always least capable of exertion; and this would be the case to a far greater extent, but that nature beneficently alters her proportions as she increases her scale; giving, as we have seen, long legs and enormous wings to the smaller tribes, and short and thick proportion to the larger. So in vegetables—compare the stalk of an ear of oat, and the trunk of a pine, the mechanical relations being in both the same. So also in waves, of which the large never can be mere exaggerations of the small, but have different slopes and curvatures: so in mountains and all things else, necessarily, and from ordinary mechanical laws. Whence in architecture, according to the scale of the building, its proportions must be altered; and I have no hesitation in calling that unmeaning exaggeration of parts in St. Peter's, of flutings, volutes, friezes, etc., in the proportions of a smaller building, a vulgar blunder, and one that destroys all the majesty that the building ought to have had—and still more I should so call all imitations and adaptations of large buildings on a small scale. The true test of right proportion is that it shall itself inform us of the scale of the building, and be such that even in a drawing it shall instantly induce the conception of the actual size, or size intended. I know not what Fuseli means by that aphorism of his:—

"Disproportion of parts is the element of hugeness—proportion, of grandeur. All Gothic styles of Architecture are huge. The Greek alone is grand." When a building *is* vast, it ought to look so; and the proportion is right which exhibits its vastness. Nature loses no size by her proportion; her buttressed mountains have more of Gothic than of Greek in them.

structive proportion has been duly observed, as it is agreeable to see that anything is fit for its purpose or for ours, and also that it has been the result of intelligence in the workman of it, so that we sometimes feel a pleasure in apparent non-adaptation, if it be a sign of ingenuity; as in the unnatural and seemingly impossible lightness of Gothic spires and roofs.

Now, the errors against which I would caution the reader in this matter are three. The first, is the overlooking or denial of the power of apparent proportion, of which power neither Burke nor any other writer whose works I have met with, take cognizance. The second, is the attribution of *beauty* to the appearances of constructive proportion. The third, the denial with Burke of *any* value or agreeableness in constructive proportion.

§ 11. The value of apparent proportion in curvature.

Now, the full proof of the influence of apparent proportion, I must reserve for illustration by diagram; one or two instances however may be given at present for the better understanding of its nature.

We have already asserted that all curves are more beautiful than right lines. All curves, however, are not equally beautiful, and their differences of beauty depend on the different proportions borne to each other by those infinitely small right lines of which they may be conceived as composed.

When these lines are equal and contain equal angles, there can be no connection or unity of sequence in them. The resulting curve, the circle, is therefore the least beautiful of all curves.

When the lines bear to each other some certain proportion; or when, the lines remaining equal, the angles vary; or when by any means whatsoever, and in whatever complicated modes, such differences as shall imply connection are established between the infinitely small segments, the resulting curves become beautiful. The simplest of the beautiful curves are the conic, and the various spirals; but it is as rash as it is difficult to endeavor to trace any ground of superiority or inferiority among the infinite numbers of the higher curves. I believe that almost all are beautiful in their own nature, and that their comparative beauty depends on the constant quantities involved in their equations. Of this point I shall speak hereafter at greater length.

The universal forces of nature, and the individual energies of the matter submitted to them, are so appointed and balanced, that they are continually bringing out curves of this kind in all visible forms, and that circular lines become nearly impossible under any circumstances. The gradual acceleration, for instance, of velocity, in streams that descend from hill-sides, as it gradually increases their power of erosion increases in the same gradual degree the rate of curvature in the descent of the slope, until at a certain degree of steepness this descent meets, and is concealed by the right line of the detritus. The junction of this right line with the plain is again modified by the farther bounding of the larger blocks, and by the successively diminishing proportion of land-slips caused by erosion at the bottom, so that the whole line of the hill is one of curvature, first, gradually increasing in rapidity to the maximum steepness of which the particular rock is capable, and then decreasing in a decreasing ratio, until it arrives at the plain level. This type of form, modified of course more or less by the original boldness of the mountain, and dependent both on its age, its constituent rock, and the circumstances of its exposure, is yet in its general formula applicable to all. So the curves of all things in motion, and of all organic forms, most rudely and simply in the shell spirals, and in their most complicated development in the muscular lines of the higher animals.

§ 12. How by nature obtained.

This influence of apparent proportion, a proportion, be it observed, which has no reference to ultimate ends, but which is itself, seemingly, the end and object of operation in many of the forces of nature, is therefore at the root of all our delight in any beautiful form whatsoever. For no form can be beautiful which is not composed of curves whose unity is secured by relations of this kind.

Not only however in curvature, but in all associations of lines whatsoever, it is desirable that there should be reciprocal relation, and the eye is unhappy without perception of it. It is utterly vain to endeavor to reduce this proportion to finite rules, for it is as various as musical melody, and the laws to which it is subject are of the same general kind, so that the determination of right or wrong

§ 13. Apparent proportion in melodies of line.

proportion is as much a matter of feeling and experience as the appreciation of good musical composition; not but that there is a science of both, and principles which may not be infringed, but that within these limits the liberty of invention is infinite, and the degrees of excellence infinite also, whence the curious error of Burke in imagining that because he could not fix upon some one given proportion of lines as better than any other, therefore proportion had no value nor influence at all, which is the same as to conclude that there is no such thing as melody in music, because there are melodies more than one.

The argument of Burke on this subject is summed up in the following words:—"Examine the head of a beautiful horse, find what proportion that bears to his body and to his limbs, and what relations these have to each other, and when you have settled these proportions, as a standard of beauty, then take a dog or cat, or any other animal, and examine how far the same proportions between their heads and their necks, between those and the body, and so on, are found to hold; I think we may safely say, that they differ in every species, yet that there are individuals found in a great many species, so differing, that have a very striking beauty. Now if it be allowed that very different, and even contrary forms and dispositions, are consistent with beauty, it amounts, I believe, to a concession, that no certain measures operating from a natural principle are necessary to produce it, at least so far as the brute species is concerned."

§ 14. Error of Burke in this matter.

In this argument there are three very palpable fallacies: the first is the rough application of measurement to the heads, necks, and limbs, without observing the subtile differences of proportion and position of parts in the members themselves, for it would be strange if the different adjustment of the ears and brow in the dog and horse, did not require a harmonizing difference of adjustment in the head and neck. The second fallacy is that above specified, the supposition that proportion cannot be beautiful if susceptible of variation, whereas the whole meaning of the term has reference to the adjustment and functional correspondence of infinitely variable quantities. And the third error is the oversight of the very important fact, that, although "different and even contrary forms and disposi-

tions are consistent with beauty," they are by no means consistent with equal *degrees* of beauty, so that, while we find in all the presence of such proportion and harmony of form, as gifts them with positive agreeableness consistent with the station and dignity of each, we perceive, also, such superiority of proportion in some (as the horse, eagle, lion, and man for instance) as may best be in harmony with the nobler functions and more exalted powers of the animals.

And this allowed superiority of some animal forms to others is, in itself argument against the second error above named, that of attributing the sensation of beauty to the perception of expedient or constructive proportion. For everything that God has made is equally well constructed with reference to its intended functions. But all things are not equally beautiful. The megatherium is absolutely as well proportioned, with the view of adaptation of parts to purposes, as the horse or the swan; but by no means so handsome as either. The fact is, that the perception of expediency of proportion can but rarely affect our estimates of beauty, for it implies a knowledge which we very rarely and imperfectly possess, and the want of which we tacitly acknowledge.

§15. Constructive proportion. Its influence in plants.

Let us consider that instance of the proportion of the stalk of a plant to its head, given by Burke. In order to judge of the expediency of this proportion, we must know, First, the scale of the plant (for the smaller the scale, the longer the stem may safely be). Secondly, the toughness of the materials of the stem and the mode of their mechanical structure. Thirdly, the specific gravity of the head. Fourthly, the position of the head which the nature of fructification requires. Fifthly, the accidents and influences to which the situation for which the plant was created is exposed. Until we know all this, we cannot say that proportion or disproportion exists, and because we cannot know all this, the idea of expedient proportion enters but slightly into our impression of vegetable beauty, but rather, since the existence of the plant proves that these proportions have been observed, and we know that nothing but our own ignorance prevents us from perceiving them, we take the proportion on credit, and are delighted by the variety of results

which the Divine intelligence has attained in the various involutions of these quantities, and perhaps most when, to outward appearance, such proportions have been violated; more by the slenderness of the campanula than the security of the pine.

§ 16. And animals.

What is obscure in plants, is utterly incomprehensible in animals, owing to the greater number of means employed and functions performed. To judge of expedient proportion in them, we must know all that each member has to do, all its bones, all its muscles, and the amount of nervous energy communicable to them; and yet, forasmuch as we have more experience and instinctive sense of the strength of muscles than of wood, and more practical knowledge of the use of a head or a foot than of a flower or a stem, we are much more likely to presume upon our judgment respecting proportions here, we are very apt to assert that the plesiosaurus and camelopard have necks too long, that the turnspit has legs too short, and the elephant a body too ponderous.

But the painfulness arising from the idea of this being the case is occasioned partly by our sympathy with the animal, partly by our false apprehension of incompletion in the Divine work,* nor in either case has it any connection with impressions of that typical beauty of which we are at present speaking; though some, perhaps, with that vital beauty which will hereafter come under discussion.

§ 17. Summary.

I wish therefore the reader to hold, respecting proportion generally, First, That apparent proportion, or the melodious connection of quantities, is a cause of unity, and therefore one of the sources of all beautiful form. Secondly, That constructive proportion is agreeable to the mind when it is known or supposed, and that its seeming absence is painful in a like degree, but that this pleasure and pain have nothing in common with those dependent on ideas of beauty.

Farther illustrations of the value of unity I shall reserve for our detailed examination, as the bringing them forward here would interfere with the general idea of the subject-matter of the theoretic faculty which I wish succinctly to convey.

* For the just and severe reproof of which, compare Sir Charles Bell, (on the hand,) pp. 31, 32.

CHAPTER VII.

OF REPOSE, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE PERMANENCE.

THERE is probably no necessity more imperatively felt by the artist, no test more unfailing of the greatness of artistical treatment, than that of the appearance of repose, and yet there is no quality whose semblance in mere matter is more difficult to define or illustrate. Nevertheless, I believe that our instinctive love of it, as well as the cause to which I attribute that love, (although here also, as in the former cases, I contend not for the interpretation, but for the fact,) will be readily allowed by the reader. As opposed to passion, changefulness, or laborious exertion, repose is the especial and separating characteristic of the eternal mind and power; it is the "I am" of the Creator opposed to the "I become" of all creatures; it is the sign alike of the supreme knowledge which is incapable of surprise, the supreme power which is incapable of labor, the supreme volition which is incapable of change; it is the stillness of the beams of the eternal chambers laid upon the variable waters of ministering creatures; and as we saw before that the infinity which was a type of the Divine nature on the one hand, became yet more desirable on the other from its peculiar address to our prison hopes, and to the expectations of an unsatisfied and unaccomplished existence, so the types of this third attribute of the Deity might seem to have been rendered farther attractive to mortal instinct, through the infliction upon the fallen creature of a curse necessitating a labor once unnatural and still most painful, so that the desire of rest planted in the heart is no sensual nor unworthy one, but a longing for renovation and for escape from a state whose every phase is mere preparation for another equally transitory, to one in which permanence shall have become possible through perfection. Hence the great call of Christ to men, that call on which St. Augustine fixed essential expression of

§ 1. Universal feeling respecting the necessity of repose in art. Its sources.

Christian hope, is accompanied by the promise of rest ;* and the death bequest of Christ to men is peace.

§ 2. Repose how expressed in matter.

Repose, as it is expressed in material things, is either a simple appearance of permanence and quietness, as in the massy forms of a mountain or rock, accompanied by the lulling effect of all mighty sight and sound, which all feel and none define, (it would be less sacred if more explicable,) ἕυδουσιν ὀρέων κορυφαί τε καὶ φάραγγες, or else it is repose proper, the rest of things in which there is vitality or capability of motion actual or imagined ; and with respect to these the expression of repose is greater in proportion to the amount and sublimity of the action which is not taking place, as well as to the intensity of the negation of it. Thus we speak not of repose in a stone, because the motion of a stone has nothing in it of energy nor vitality, neither its repose of stability. But having once seen a great rock come down a mountain side, we have a noble sensation of its rest, now bedded immovably among the under fern, because the power and fearfulness of its motion were great, and its stability and negation of motion are now great in proportion. Hence the imagination, which delights in nothing more than the enhancing of the characters of repose, effects this usually by either attributing to things visibly energetic an ideal stability, or to things visibly stable an ideal activity or vitality. Hence Wordsworth, of the cloud, which in itself having too much of changefulness for his purpose, is spoken of as one "that heareth not the loud winds when they call, and moveth altogether, if it move at all." And again of children, which, that it may remove from them the child restlessness, the imagination conceives as rooted flowers "Beneath an old gray oak, as violets, lie." On the other hand, the scattered rocks, which have not, as such, vitality enough for rest, are gifted with it by the living image : they "lie couched around us like a flock of sheep."

§ 3. The necessity to repose of an implied energy.

Thus, as we saw that unity demanded for its expression what at first might have seemed its contrary (variety) so repose demands for its expression the implied capability of its opposite, energy, and this even in its lower manifestations, in rocks and stones and trees. By

* Matt. xi. 28.

comparing the modes in which the mind is disposed to regard the boughs of a fair and vigorous tree, motionless in the summer air, with the effect produced by one of these same boughs hewn square and used for threshold or lintel, the reader will at once perceive the connection of vitality with repose, and the part they both bear in beauty.

But that which in lifeless things ennobles them by seeming to indicate life, ennobles higher creatures by indicating the exaltation of their earthly vitality into a Divine vitality; and raising the life of sense into the life of faith—faith, whether we receive it in the sense of adherence to resolution, obedience to law, regardfulness of promise, in which from all time it has been the test as the shield of the true being and life of man, or in the still higher sense of trustfulness in the presence, kindness, and word of God; in which form it has been exhibited under the Christian dispensation. For whether in one or other form, whether the faithfulness of men whose path is chosen and portion fixed, in the following and receiving of that path and portion, as in the Thermopylæ camp; or the happier faithfulness of children in the good giving of their Father, and of subjects in the conduct of their king, as in the "Stand still and see the salvation of God" of the Red Sea shore, there is rest and peacefulness, the "standing still" in both, the quietness of action determined, of spirit unalarmed, of expectation unimpatient: beautiful, even when based only as of old, on the self-command and self-possession, the persistent dignity or the uncalculating love of the creature,* but more beautiful yet when the rest is one of humility

§ 4. Mental repose, how noble.

* "The universal instinct of repose,
The longing for confirmed tranquillity
Inward and outward, humble, yet sublime.
The life where hope and memory are as one.
Earth quiet and unchanged; the human soul
Consistent in self-rule; and heaven revealed
To meditation, in that quietness."
WORDSWORTH. Excursion, Book iii.

But compare carefully (for this is put into the mouth of one diseased in thought and erring in seeking) the opening of the ninth book; and observe the difference between the mildew of inaction,—the slumber of Death; and the Patience of the Saints—the Rest of the Sabbath Eternal. (Rev. xiv. 13.)

Compare also, Chap. I. § 6.

instead of pride, and the trust no more in the resolution we have taken, but in the hand we hold.

§ 5. Its universal value as a test of art.

Hence I think that there is no desire more intense or more exalted than that which exists in all rightly disciplined minds for the evidences of repose in external signs, and what I cautiously said respecting infinity, I say fearlessly respecting repose, that no work of art can be great without it, and that all art is great in proportion to the appearance of it. It is the most unfailing test of beauty, whether of matter or of motion, nothing can be ignoble that possesses it, nothing right that has it not, and in strict proportion to its appearance in the work is the majesty of mind to be inferred in the artificer. Without regard to other qualities, we may look to this for our evidence, and by the search for this alone we may be led to the rejection of all that is base, and the accepting of all that is good and great, for the paths of wisdom are all peace. We shall see by this light three colossal images standing up side by side, looming in their great rest of spirituality above the whole world horizon, Phidias, Michael Angelo, and Dante; and then, separated from their great religious thrones only by less fulness and earnestness of Faith, Homer, and Shakspeare; and from these we may go down step by step among the mighty men of every age, securely and certainly observant of diminished lustre in every appearance of restlessness and effort, until the last trace of true inspiration vanishes in the tottering affectations or the tortured insanities of modern times. There is no art, no pursuit, whatsoever, but its results may be classed by this test alone; everything of evil is betrayed and winnowed away by it, glitter and confusion and glare of color, inconsistency or absence of thought, forced expression, evil choice of subject, over accumulation of materials, whether in painting or literature, the shallow and unreflecting nothingness of the English schools of art, the strained and disgusting horrors of the French, the distorted feverishness of the German:—pretence, over decoration, over division of parts in architecture, and again in music, in acting, in dancing, in whatsoever art, great or mean, there are yet degrees of greatness or meanness entirely dependent on this single quality of repose.

§ 6. Instances in the Laocoon and Theseus.

Particular instances are at present both needless and cannot but be inadequate; needless, because I suppose that every reader, however limited his experience of art, can supply many for himself, and inadequate, because no number of them could illustrate the full extent of the influence of the expression. I believe, however, that by comparing the disgusting convulsions of the Laocoon, with the Elgin Theseus, we may obtain a general idea of the effect of the influence, as shown by its absence in one, and presence in the other, of two works which, as far as artistical merit is concerned, are in some measure parallel, not that I believe, even in this respect, the Laocoon justifiably comparable with the Theseus. I suppose that no group has exercised so pernicious an influence on art as this, a subject ill chosen, meanly conceived and unnaturally treated, recommended to imitation by subtleties of execution and accumulation of technical knowledge.*

* I would also have the reader compare with the meagre lines and contemptible tortures of the Laocoon, the awfulness and quietness of M. Angelo's treatment of a subject in most respects similar, (the plague of the Fiery Serpents,) but of which the choice was justified both by the place which the event holds in the typical system he had to arrange, and by the grandeur of the plague itself, in its multitudinous grasp, and its mystical salvation; sources of sublimity entirely wanting to the slaughter of the Dardan priest. It is good to see how his gigantic intellect reaches after repose, and truthfully finds it, in the falling hand of the near figure, and in the deathful decline of that whose hands are held up even in their venom coldness to the cross; and though irrelevant to our present purpose, it is well also to note how the grandeur of this treatment results, not merely from choice, but from a greater knowledge and more faithful rendering of truth. For whatever knowledge of the human frame there may be in the Laocoon, there is certainly none of the habits of serpents. The fixing of the snake's head in the side of the principal figure is as false to nature, as it is poor in composition of line. A large serpent never wants to bite, it wants to hold, it seizes therefore always where it can hold best, by the extremities, or throat, it seizes once and forever, and that before it coils, following up the seizure with the twist of its body round the victim, as invisibly swift as the twist of a whip lash round any hard object it may strike, and then it holds fast, never moving the jaws or the body, if its prey has any power of struggling left, it throws round another coil, without quitting the hold with the jaws; if Laocoon had had to do with real serpents, instead of pieces of tape with heads to them, he would have been held still, and not allowed to throw his arms or legs about. It is most in-

§ 7. And in altar tombs.

In Christian art, it would be well to compare the feeling of the finer among the altar tombs of the middle ages, with any monumental works after Michael Angelo, perhaps more especially with works of Roubilliac or Canova.

In the Cathedral of Lucca, near the entrance door of the north transept, there is a monument of Jacopo della Quercia's to Ilaria di Caretto, the wife of Paolo Guinigi. I name it not as more beautiful or perfect than other examples of the same period, but as furnishing an instance of the exact and right mean between the rigidity and rudeness of the earlier monumental effigies, and the morbid imitation of life, sleep, or death, of which the fashion has taken place in modern times.* She is

structive to observe the accuracy of Michael Angelo in the rendering of these circumstances; the binding of the arms to the body, and the knotting of the whole mass of agony together, until we hear the crashing of the bones beneath the grisly sliding of the engine folds. Note also the expression in all the figures of another circumstance, the torpor and cold numbness of the limbs induced by the serpent venom, which, though justifiably overlooked by the sculptor of the Laocoon, as well as by Virgil—in consideration of the rapidity of the death by crushing, adds infinitely to the power of the Florentine's conception, and would have been better hinted by Virgil, than that sickening distribution of venom on the garlands. In fact, Virgil has missed both of truth and impressiveness every way—the "morsu depascitur" is unnatural butchery—the "perfusus veneno" gratuitous foulness —the "clamores horrendos," impossible degradation; compare carefully the remarks on this statue in Sir Charles Bell's Essay on Expression, (third edition, p. 192) where he has most wisely and uncontrovertibly deprived the statue of all claim to expression of energy and fortitude of mind, and shown its common and coarse intent of mere bodily exertion and agony, while he has confirmed Payne Knight's just condemnation of the passage in Virgil.

If the reader wishes to see the opposite or imaginative view of the subject, let him compare Winkelmann; and Schiller, Letters on Æsthetic Culture.

* Whenever, in monumental work, the sculptor reaches a deceptive appearance of life or death, or of concomitant details, he has gone too far. The statue should be felt for such, not look like a dead or sleeping body; it should not convey the impression of a corpse, nor of sick and outwearied flesh, but it should be the marble *image* of death or weariness. So the concomitants should be distinctly marble, severe and monumental in their lines, not shroud, not bedclothes, not actual armor nor brocade, not a real soft pillow, not a downright hard stuffed mattress, but the mere type and suggestion of these: a certain rudeness and incompletion of finish is very noble

lying on a simple couch, with a hound at her feet, not on the side, but with the head laid straight and simply on the hard pillow, in which, let it be observed, there is no effort at deceptive imitation of pressure. It is understood as a pillow, but not mistaken for one. The hair is bound in a flat braid over the fair brow, the sweet and arched eyes are closed, the tenderness of the loving lips is set and quiet, there is that about them which forbids breath, something which is not death nor sleep, but the pure image of both. The hands are not lifted in prayer, neither folded, but the arms are laid at length upon the body, and the hands cross as they fall. The feet are hidden by the drapery, and the forms of the limbs concealed, but not their tenderness.

If any of us, after staying for a time beside this tomb, could see through his tears, one of the vain and unkind encumbrances of the grave, which, in these hollow and heartless days, feigned sorrow builds to foolish pride, he would, I believe, receive such a lesson of love as no coldness could refuse, no fatuity forget, and no insolence disobey.

in all. Not that they are to be unnatural, such lines as are given should be pure and true, and clear of the hardness and mannered rigidity of the strictly Gothic types, but lines so few and grand as to appeal to the imagination only, and always to stop short of realization. There is a monument put up lately by a modern Italian sculptor in one of the side chapels of Santa Croce, the face fine and the execution dexterous. But it looks as if the person had been restless all night, and the artist admitted to a faithful study of the disturbed bedclothes in the morning.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF SYMMETRY, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE JUSTICE.

WE shall not be long detained by the consideration of this, the fourth constituent of beauty, as its nature is universally felt and understood. In all perfectly beautiful objects, there is found the opposition of one part to another and a reciprocal balance obtained; in animals the balance being commonly between opposite sides, (note the disagreeableness occasioned by the exception in flat fish, having the eyes on one side of the head,) but in vegetables the opposition is less distinct, as in the boughs on opposite sides of trees, and the leaves and sprays on each side of the boughs, and in dead matter less perfect still, often amounting only to a certain tendency towards a balance, as in the opposite sides of valleys and alternate windings of streams. In things in which perfect symmetry is from their nature impossible or improper, a balance must be at least in some measure expressed before they can be beheld with pleasure. Hence the necessity of what artists require as opposing lines or masses in composition, the propriety of which, as well as their value, depends chiefly on their inartificial and natural invention. Absolute equality is not required, still less absolute similarity. A mass of subdued color may be balanced by a point of a powerful one, and a long and latent line overpowered by a short and conspicuous one. The only error against which it is necessary to guard the reader with respect to symmetry, is the confounding it with proportion, though it seems strange that the two terms could ever have been used as synonymous. Symmetry is the *opposition* of *equal* quantities to each other. Proportion the *connection* of *unequal* quantities with each other. The property of a tree in sending out equal boughs on opposite sides is symmetrical. Its sending out shorter and smaller towards the top,

§ 1. Symmetry, what and how found in organic nature.

§ 2. How necessary in art.

proportional. In the human face its balance of opposite sides is symmetry, its division upwards, proportion.

§ 3. To what its agreeableness is referable. Various instances.

Whether the agreeableness of symmetry be in any way referable to its expression of the Aristotelian ἰσότης, that is to say of abstract justice, I leave the reader to determine; I only assert respecting it, that it is necessary to the dignity of every form, and that by the removal of it we shall render the other elements of beauty comparatively ineffectual: though, on the other hand, it is to be observed that it is rather a mode of arrangement of qualities than a quality itself; and hence symmetry has little power over the mind, unless all the other constituents of beauty be found together with it. A form may be symmetrical and ugly, as many Elizabethan ornaments, and yet not so ugly as it had been if unsymmetrical, but bettered always by increasing degrees of symmetry; as in star figures, wherein there is a circular symmetry of many like members, whence their frequent use for the plan and ground of ornamental designs; so also it is observable that foliage in which the leaves are concentrically grouped, as in the chestnuts, and many shrubs—rhododendrons for instance—(whence the perfect beauty of the Alpine rose)—is far nobler in its effect than any other, so that the sweet chestnut of all trees most fondly and frequently occurs in the landscape of Tintoret and Titian, beside which all other landscape grandeur vanishes: and even in the meanest things the rule holds, as in the kaleidoscope, wherein agreeableness is given to forms altogether accidental merely by their repetition and reciprocal opposition; which orderly balance and arrangement are essential to the perfect operation of the more earnest and solemn qualities of the beautiful, as being heavenly in their nature, and contrary to the violence and disorganization of sin, so that the seeking of them and submission to them is always marked in minds that have been subjected to high moral discipline, constant in all the great religious painters, to the degree of being an offence and a scorn to men of less tuned and tranquil feeling. Equal ranks of saints are placed on each side of the picture, if there be a kneeling figure on one side, there is a corresponding one on the other, the attendant angels beneath and above are arranged in like order. The Raffaelle at Blen-

§ 4. Especially in religious art.

heim, the Madonna di St. Sisto, the St. Cicilia, and all the works of Perugino, Francia, and John Bellini present some such form, and the balance at least is preserved even in pictures of action necessitating variety of grouping, as always by Giotto; and by Ghirlandajo in the introduction of his chorus-like side figures, and by Tintoret most eminently in his noblest work, the Crucifixion, where not only the grouping but the arrangement of light is absolutely symmetrical. Where there is no symmetry, the effects of passion and violence are increased, and many very sublime pictures derive their sublimity from the want of it, but they lose proportionally in the diviner quality of beauty. In landscape the same sense of symmetry is preserved, as we shall presently see, even to artificialness, by the greatest men, and it is one of the principal sources of deficient feeling in the landscapes of the present day, that the symmetry of nature is sacrificed to irregular picturesqueness. Of this, however, hereafter.

CHAPTER IX.

OF PURITY, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE ENERGY.

IT may at first appear strange that I have not in my enumeration of the types of Divine attributes, included that which is certainly the most visible and evident of all, as well as the most distinctly expressed in Scripture; God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. But I could not logically class the presence of an actual substance or motion with mere conditions and modes of being, neither could I logically separate from any of these, that which is evidently necessary to the perception of all. And it is also to be observed, that though the love of light is more instinctive in the human heart than any other of the desires connected with beauty, we can hardly separate its agreeableness in its own nature from the sense of its necessity and value for the purposes of life, neither the abstract painfulness of darkness from the sense of danger and incapacity connected with it; and note also that it is not *all* light, but light possessing the universal qualities of beauty, diffused or infinite rather than in points, tranquil, not startling and variable, pure, not sullied or oppressed, which is indeed pleasant and perfectly typical of the Divine nature.

§ 1. The influence of light as a sacred symbol.

Observe, however, that there is one quality, the idea of which had been just introduced in connection with light, which might have escaped us in the consideration of mere matter, namely purity, and yet I think that the original notion of this quality is altogether material, and has only been attributed to color when such color is suggestive of the condition of matter from which we originally received the idea. For I see not in the abstract how one color should be considered purer than another, except as more or less compounded, whereas there is certainly a sense of purity or impurity in the most compound and neutral colors, as well as in the

§ 2. The idea of purity connected with it.

simplest, a quality difficult to define, and which the reader will probably be surprised by my calling the type of energy, with which it has certainly little traceable connection in the mind.

I believe however if we carefully analyze the nature of our ideas of impurity in general, we shall find them refer especially to conditions of matter in which its various elements are placed in a relation incapable of healthy or proper operation; and most distinctly to conditions in which the negation of vital or energetic action is most evident, as in corruption and decay of all kinds, wherein particles which once, by their operation on each other, produced a living and energetic whole, are reduced to a condition of perfect passiveness, in which they are seized upon and appropriated, one by one, piecemeal, by whatever has need of them, without any power of resistance or energy of their own. And thus there is a peculiar painfulness attached to any associations of inorganic with organic matter, such as appear to involve the inactivity and feebleness of the latter, so that things which are not felt to be foul in their own nature, yet become so in association with things of greater inherent energy; as dust or earth, which in a mass excites no painful sensation, excites a most disagreeable one when strewing or staining an animal's skin, because it implies a decline and deadening of the vital and healthy power of the skin. But all reasoning about this impression is rendered difficult, by the host of associated ideas connected with it; for the ocular sense of impurity connected with corruption is infinitely enhanced by the offending of other senses and by the grief and horror of it in its own nature, as the special punishment and evidence of sin, and on the other hand, the ocular delight in purity is mingled, as I before observed, with the love of the mere element of light, as a type of wisdom and of truth; whence it seems to me that we admire the transparency of bodies, though probably it is still rather owing to our sense of more perfect order and arrangement of particles, and not to our love of light, that we look upon a piece of rock crystal as purer than a piece of marble, and on the marble as purer than a piece of chalk. And let it be observed also that the most lovely objects in nature are only partially transparent. I sup-

§ 3. Originally derived from conditions of matter.

§ 4. Associated ideas adding to the power of the impression. Influence of clearness.

pose the utmost possible sense of beauty is conveyed by a feebly translucent, smooth, but not lustrous surface of white, and pale warm red, subdued by the most pure and delicate grays, as in the finer portions of the human frame; in wreaths of snow, and in white plumage under rose light,* so Viola of Olivia in Twelfth Night, and Homer of Atrides wounded.† And I think that transparency and lustre, both beautiful in themselves, are incompatible with the highest beauty because they destroy form, on the full perception of which more of the divinely character of the object depends than upon its color. Hence, in the beauty of snow and of flesh, so much translucency is allowed as is consistent with the full explanation of the forms, while we are suffered to receive more intense impressions of light and transparency from other objects which, nevertheless, owing to their necessarily

§ 5. Perfect beauty of surface, in what consisting.

* The reader will observe that I am speaking at present of mere material qualities. If he would obtain perfect ideas respecting loveliness of luminous surface, let him closely observe a swan with its wings expanded in full light five minutes before sunset. The human cheek or the rose leaf are perhaps hardly so pure, and the forms of snow, though individually as beautiful, are less exquisitely combined.

† ὡς δ' ὅτε τίς τ' ἐλέφαντα γυνὴ φοίνικι μίηνῃ
Μηονίς.

So Spenser of Shamefacedness, an exquisite piece of glowing color—and sweetly of Belphoebe—(so the roses and lilies of all poets.) Compare the making of the image of Florimell.

"The substance whereof she the body made
Was purest snow, in massy mould congealed,
Which she had gathered in a shady glade
Of the Riphoean hills.
The same she tempered with fine mercury,
And mingled them with perfect vermily."

With Una he perhaps overdoes the white a little. She is two degrees of comparison above snow. Compare his questioning in the Hymn to Beauty, about that mixture made of colors fair; and goodly temperament, of pure complexion.

"Hath white and red in it such wondrous power
That it can pierce through the eyes into the heart?"

Where the distinction between typical and vital beauty is very gloriously carried out.

unperceived form, are not perfectly nor affectingly beautiful. A fair forehead outshines its diamond diadem. The sparkle of the cascade withdraws not our eyes from the snowy summits in their evening silence.

§ 6. Purity only metaphorically a type of sinlessness.

It may seem strange to many readers that I have not spoken of purity in that sense in which it is most frequently used, as a type of sinlessness. I do not deny that the frequent metaphorical use of it in Scripture may have and ought to have much influence on the sympathies with which we regard it, and that probably the immediate agreeableness of it to most minds arises far more from this source than from that to which I have chosen to attribute it. But, in the first place, if it be indeed in the signs of Divine and not of human attributes that beauty consists, I see not how the idea of sin can be formed with respect to the Deity, for it is an idea of a relation borne by us to Him, and not in any way to be attached to his abstract nature. And if the idea of sin is incapable of being formed with respect to Him, so also is its negative, for we cannot form an idea of negation, where we cannot form an idea of presence. If for instance one could conceive of taste or flavor in a proposition of Euclid, so also might we of insipidity, but if not of the one, then not of the other. So that, in speaking of the goodness of God, it cannot be that we mean anything more than his Love, Mercifulness, and Justice, and these attributes I have shown to be expressed by other qualities of beauty, and I cannot trace any rational connection between them and the idea of spotlessness in matter. Neither can I trace any more distinct relation between this idea, and any of the virtues which make up the righteousness of man, except perhaps those of truth and openness, of which I have already spoken as more expressed by the transparency than the mere purity of matter. So that I conceive the whole use of the terms purity, spotlessness, etc., in moral subjects, to be merely metaphorical, and that it is rather that we illustrate these virtues by the desirableness of material purity, than that we desire material purity because it is illustrative of these virtues.

I repeat, then, that the only idea which I think can be legitimately connected with purity of matter, is this of vital and energetic connection among its particles, and that the idea of foul-

ness is essentially connected with dissolution and death. Thus the purity of the rock, contrasted with the foulness of dust or mould, is expressed by the epithet "living," very singularly given in the rock, in almost all languages; singularly I say, because life is almost the last attribute one would ascribe to stone, but for this visible energy and connection of its particles: and so of water as opposed to stagnancy. And I do not think that, however pure a powder or dust may be, the idea of beauty is ever connected with it, for it is not the mere purity, but the *active* condition of the substance which is desired, so that as soon as it shoots into crystals, or gathers into efflorescence, a sensation of active or real purity is received which was not felt in the calcined caput mortuum.

§7. Energy, how expressed by purity of matter.

And again in color. I imagine that the quality of it which we term purity is dependent on the full energizing of the rays that compose it, whereof if in compound hues any are overpowered and killed by the rest, so as to be of no value nor operation, foulness is the consequence; while so long as all act together, whether side by side, or from pigments seen one through the other, so that all the coloring matter employed comes into play in the harmony desired, and none be quenched nor killed, purity results. And so in all cases I suppose that pureness is made to us desirable, because expressive of the constant presence and energizing of the Deity in matter, through which all things live and move, and have their being, and that foulness is painful as the accompaniment of disorder and decay, and always indicative of the withdrawal of Divine support. And the practical analogies of life, the invariable connection of outward foulness with mental sloth and degradation, as well as with bodily lethargy and disease, together with the contrary indications of freshness and purity belonging to every healthy and active organic frame, (singularly seen in the effort of the young leaves when first their inward energy prevails over the earth, pierces its corruption, and shakes its dust away from their own white purity of life,) all these circumstances strengthen the instinct by associations countless and irresistible. And then, finally, with the idea of purity comes that of spirituality, for the essential characteristic of mat-

§8. And of color.

§9. Spirituality, how so expressed.

ter is its inertia, whence, by adding to it purity or energy, we may in some measure spiritualize even matter itself. Thus in the descriptions of the Apocalypse it is its purity that fits it for its place in heaven; the river of the water of life, that proceeds out of the throne of the Lamb, is clear as crystal, and the pavement of the city is pure gold, like unto clear glass.*

* I have not spoken here of any of the associations connected with warmth or coolness of color, they are partly connected with vital beauty, compare Chap. xiv. § 22, 23, and partly with impressions of the sublime, the discussion of which is foreign to the present subject; purity, however, it is which gives value to both, for neither warm nor cool color, can be beautiful, if impure.

Neither have I spoken of any questions relating to melodies of color, a subject of separate science—whose general principle has been already stated in the seventh chapter respecting unity of sequence. Those qualities only are here noted which give absolute beauty, whether to separate color or to melodies of it—for all melodies are not beautiful, but only those which are expressive of certain pleasant or solemn emotions; and the rest startling, or curious, or cheerful, or exciting, or sublime, but not beautiful, (and so in music.) And all questions relating to this grandeur, cheerfulness, or other characteristic impression of color must be considered under the head of ideas of relation.

CHAPTER X.

OF MODERATION, OR THE TYPE OF GOVERNMENT BY LAW.

§1. Meaning of the terms Chasteness and Refinement.

Of objects which, in respect of the qualities hitherto considered, appear to have equal claims to regard, we find, nevertheless, that certain are preferred to others in consequence of an attractive power, usually expressed by the terms "chasteness, refinement, or elegance," and it appears also that things which in other respects have little in them of natural beauty, and are of forms altogether simple and adapted to simple uses, are capable of much distinction and desirableness in consequence of these qualities only. It is of importance to discover the real nature of the ideas thus expressed.

§2. How referable to temporary fashions.

Something of the peculiar meaning of the words is referable to the authority of fashion and the exclusiveness of pride, owing to which that which is the mode of a particular time is submissively esteemed, and that which by its costliness or its rarity is of difficult attainment, or in any way appears to have been chosen as the best of many things, (which is the original sense of the words elegant and exquisite,) is esteemed for the witness it bears to the dignity of the chooser.

But neither of these ideas are in any way connected with eternal beauty, neither do they at all account for that agreeableness of color and form which is especially termed chasteness, and which it would seem to be a characteristic of rightly trained mind in all things to prefer, and of common minds to reject.

§3. How to the perception of completion.

There is however another character of artificial productions, to which these terms have partial reference, which it is of some importance to note, that of finish, exactness, or refinement, which are commonly desired in the works of men, owing both to their difficulty of accomplishment and consequent expression of care and power (com-

pare Chapter on Ideas of Power, Part I. Sect. i.,) and from their greater resemblance to the working of God, whose "absolute exactness," says Hooker, "all things imitate, by tending to that which is most exquisite in every particular." And there is not a greater sign of the imperfection of general taste, than its capability of contentment with forms and things which, professing completion, are yet not exact nor complete, as in the vulgar with wax and clay and china figures, and in bad sculptors with an unfinished and clay-like modelling of surface, and curves and angles of no precision or delicacy; and in general, in all common and unthinking persons with an imperfect rendering of that which might be pure and fine, as church-wardens are content to lose the sharp lines of stone carving under clogging obliterations of whitewash, and as the modern Italians scrape away and polish white all the sharpness and glory of the carvings on their old churches, as most miserably and pitifully on St. Mark's at Venice, and the Baptisteries of Pistoja and Pisa, and many others; so also the delight of vulgar painters in coarse and slurred painting, merely for the sake of its coarseness,* as of Spagno-

§ 4. Finish, by great masters esteemed essential.

* It is to be carefully noted that when rude execution is evidently not the result of imperfect feeling and desire (as in these men above named, it is) but of thought; either impatient, which there was necessity to note swiftly, or impetuous, which it was well to note in mighty manner, as pre-eminently and in both kinds the case with Tintoret, and often with Michael Angelo, and in lower and more degraded modes with Rubens, and generally in the sketches and first thoughts of great masters; there is received a very noble pleasure, connected both with ideas of power (compare again Part I. Sect. ii. Chap. I.) and with certain actions of the imagination of which we shall speak presently. But this pleasure is not received from the beauty of the work, for nothing can be perfectly beautiful unless complete, but from its simplicity and sufficiency to its immediate purpose, where the purpose is not of beauty at all, as often in things rough-hewn, pre-eminently for instance in the stones of the foundations of the Pitti and Strozzi palaces, whose noble rudeness is to be opposed both to the useless polish, and the barbarous rustications of modern times, (although indeed this instance is not without exception to be received, for the majesty of these rocky buildings depends also in some measure upon the real beauty and finish of the natural curvilinear fractures, opposed to the coarseness of human chiselling,) and again, as it respects works of higher art, the pleasure of their hasty or imperfect execution is not indicative of their beauty, but of their majesty

letto, Salvator, or Murillo, opposed to the divine finish which the greatest and mightiest of men disdained not, but rather wrought out with painfulness and life spending; as Leonardo and Michael Angelo, (for the latter, however many things he left unfinished, did finish, if at all, with a refinement that the eye cannot follow, but the feeling only, as in the Pieta of Genoa,) and Perugino always, even to the gilding of single hairs among his angel tresses, and the young Raffaelle, when he was heaven taught, and Angelico, and Pinturicchio, and John Bellini, and all other such serious and loving men. Only it is to be observed that this finish is not a part or constituent of beauty, but the full and ultimate rendering of it, so that it is an idea only connected with the works of men, for all the works of the Deity are finished with the same, that is, infinite care and completion: and so what degrees of beauty exist among them can in no way be dependent upon this source, inasmuch as there are between them no degrees of care. And therefore, as there certainly is admitted a difference of degree in what we call chasteness, even in Divine work, (compare the hollyhock or the sunflower with the vale lily,) we must seek for it some other explanation and source than this.

And if, bringing down our ideas of it from complicated objects to simple lines and colors, we analyze and regard them carefully, I think we shall be able to trace them to an under-

and fulness of thought and vastness of power. Shade is only beautiful when it magnifies and sets forth the forms of fair things, so negligence is only noble when it is, as Fuseli hath it, "the shadow of energy." Which that it may be, secure the substance and the shade will follow, but let the artist beware of stealing the manner of giant intellects when he has not their intention, and of assuming large modes of treatment when he has little thoughts to treat. There is large difference between indolent impatience of labor and intellectual impatience of delay, large difference between leaving things unfinished because we have more to do, or because we are satisfied with what we have done. Tintoret, who prayed hard, and hardly obtained, that he might be permitted, the charge of his colors only being borne, to paint a new built house from base to battlement, was not one to shun labor, it is the pouring in upon him of glorious thoughts in inexpressible multitude that his sweeping hand follows so fast. It is as easy to know the slightness of earnest haste from the slightness of blunt feeling, indolence, or affectation, as it is to know the dust of a race, from the dust of dissolution.

current of constantly agreeable feeling, excited by the appearance in material things of a self-restrained liberty, that is to say, by the image of that acting of God with regard to all his creation, wherein, though free to operate in whatever arbitrary, sudden, violent, or inconstant ways he will, he yet, if we may reverently so speak, restrains in himself this his omnipotent liberty, and works always in consistent modes, called by us laws. And this restraint or moderation, according to the words of Hooker, ("that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the form and measure of working, the same we term a law,") is in the Deity not restraint, such as it is said of creatures, but, as again says Hooker, "the very being of God is a law to his working," so that every appearance of painfulness or want of power and freedom in material things is wrong and ugly; for the right restraint, the image of Divine operation, is both in them, and in men, a willing and not painful stopping short of the utmost degree to which their power might reach, and the appearance of fettering or confinement is the cause of ugliness in the one, as the slightest painfulness or effort in restraint is a sign of sin in the other.

§ 5. Moderation, its nature and value.

I have put this attribute of beauty last, because I consider it the girdle and safeguard of all the rest, and in this respect the most essential of all, for it is possible that a certain degree of beauty may be attained even in the absence of one of its other constituents, as sometimes in some measure without symmetry or without unity. But the least appearance of violence or extravagance, of the want of moderation and restraint, is, I think, destructive of all beauty whatsoever in everything, color, form, motion, language, or thought, giving rise to that which in color we call glaring, in form inelegant, in motion ungraceful, in language coarse, in thought undisciplined, in all unchastened; which qualities are in everything most painful, because the signs of disobedient and irregular operation. And herein we at last find the reason of that which has been so often noted respecting the subtilty and almost invisibility of natural curves and colors, and why it is that we look on those lines as least beautiful which fall into wide and far license of curvature,

§ 6. It is the girdle of beauty.

§ 7. How found in natural curves and colors.

and as most beautiful which approach nearest (so that the curvilinear character be distinctly asserted) to the government of the right line, as in the pure and severe curves of the draperies of the religious painters; and thus in color it is not red, but rose-color which is most beautiful, neither such actual green as we find in summer foliage partly, and in our painting of it constantly; but such gray green as that into which nature modifies her distant tints, or such pale green and uncertain as we see in sunset sky, and in the clefts of the glacier and the chrysoprase, and the sea-foam; and so of all colors, not that they may not sometimes be deep and full, but that there is a solemn moderation even in their very fulness, and a holy reference beyond and out of their own nature to great harmonies by which they are governed, and in obedience to which is their glory. Whereof the ignorance is shown in all evil colorists by the violence and positiveness of their hues, and by dulness and discordance consequent, for the very brilliancy and real power of all color is dependent on the chastening of it, as of a voice on its gentleness, and as of action on its calmness, and as all moral vigor on self-command. And therefore as that virtue which men last, and with most difficulty attain unto, and which many attain not at all, and yet that which is essential to the conduct and almost to the being of all other virtues, since neither imagination, nor invention, nor industry, nor sensibility, nor energy, nor any other good having, is of full avail without this of self-command, whereby works truly masculine and mighty are produced, and by the signs of which they are separated from that lower host of things brilliant, magnificent and redundant, and farther yet from that of the loose, the lawless, the exaggerated, the insolent, and the profane, I would have the necessity of it foremost among all our inculcating, and the name of it largest among all our inscribing, in so far that, over the doors of every school of Art, I would have this one word, relieved out in deep letters of pure gold,—Moderation.

§ 8. How difficult of attainment, yet essential to all good.

CHAPTER XI.

GENERAL INFERENCES RESPECTING TYPICAL BEAUTY.

I HAVE now enumerated, and in some measure explained those characteristics of mere matter by which I conceive it becomes agreeable to the theoretic faculty, under whatever form, dead, organized, or animated, it may present itself. It will be our task in the succeeding volume to examine, and illustrate by examples, the mode in which these characteristics appear in every division of creation, in stones, mountains, waves, clouds, and all organic bodies; beginning with vegetables, and then taking instances in the range of animals from the mollusc to man; examining how one animal form is nobler than another, by the more manifest presence of these attributes, and chiefly endeavoring to show how much there is of admirable and lovely, even in what is commonly despised. At present I have only to mark the conclusions at which we have as yet arrived respecting the rank of the theoretic faculty, and then to pursue the inquiry farther into the nature of vital beauty.

§ 1. The subject incompletely treated, yet admitting of general conclusions.

As I before said, I pretend not to have enumerated all the sources of material beauty, nor the analogies connected with them; it is probable that others may occur to many readers, or to myself as I proceed into more particular inquiry, but I am not careful to collect all conceivable evidence on the subject. I desire only to assert and prove some certain principles, and by means of these to show, in some measure, the inherent worthiness and glory of God's works and something of the relations they bear to each other and to us, leaving the subject to be fully pursued, as it only can be, by the ardor and affection of those whom it may interest.

The qualities above enumerated are not to be considered as stamped upon matter for our teaching or enjoyment only, but as

the necessary consequence of the perfection of God's working, and the inevitable stamp of his image on what he creates. For it would be inconsistent with his Infinite perfection to work imperfectly in any place, or in any matter; wherefore we do not find that flowers and fair trees, and kindly skies, are given only where man may see them and be fed by them, but the Spirit of God works everywhere alike, where there is no eye to see, covering all lonely places with an equal glory, using the same pencil and outpouring the same splendor, in the caves of the waters where the sea-snakes swim, and in the desert where the satyrs dance, among the fir-trees of the stork, and the rocks of the conies, as among those higher creatures whom he has made capable witnesses of his working. Nevertheless, I think that the admission of different degrees of this glory and image of himself upon creation, has the look of something meant especially for us; for although, in pursuance of the appointed system of government by universal laws, these same degrees exist where we cannot witness them, yet the existence of degrees at all seems at first unlikely in Divine work, and I cannot see reason for it unless that palpable one of increasing in us the understanding of the sacred characters by showing us the results of their comparative absence. For I know not that if all things had been equally beautiful, we could have received the idea of beauty at all, or if we had, certainly it had become a matter of indifference to us, and of little thought, whereas through the beneficent ordaining of degrees in its manifestation, the hearts of men are stirred by its occasional occurrence in its noblest form, and all their energies are awakened in the pursuit of it, and endeavor to arrest it or recreate it for themselves. But whatever doubt there may be respecting the exact amount of modification of created things admitted with reference to us, there can be none respecting the dignity of that faculty by which we receive the mysterious evidence of their divine origin. The fact of our deriving constant pleasure from whatever is a type or semblance of Divine attributes, and from nothing but that which is so, is the most glorious of all that can be demonstrated of human nature; it *not only sets* a great gulf of specific separation between us and

§ 2. Typical beauty not created for man's sake.

§ 3. But degrees of it for his sake admitted.

§ 4. What encouragement hence to be received.

the lower animals, but it seems a promise of a communion ultimately deep, close, and conscious, with the Being whose darkened manifestations we here feebly and unthinkingly delight in. Probably to every order of intelligence more of his image becomes palpable in all around them, and the glorified spirits and the angels have perceptions as much more full and rapturous than ours, as ours than those of beasts and creeping things. And receiving it, as we must, for an universal axiom that "no natural desire can be entirely frustrate," and seeing that these desires are indeed so unfailing in us that they have escaped not the reasoners of any time, but were held divine of old, and in even heathen countries,* it cannot be but that there is in these visionary pleasures, lightly as we now regard them, cause for thankfulness, ground for hope, anchor for faith, more than in all the other manifold gifts and guidances, wherewith God crowns the years, and hedges the paths of men.

* Ἡ δὲ τελεία ἐυδαιμονία θεωρητική τίς ἐστιν ἐνέργεια. ** τοῖς μὲν γὰρ θεοῖς ἅπας ὁ βίος μακάριος, τοῖς δ' ἀνθρώποις, ἐφ' ὅσον ὁμοίωμά τι τῆς τοιάυτης ἐνεργείας ὑπάρχει. τῶν δ'ἄλλων ζώων οὐδὲν ἐυδαιμονεῖ. ἐπειδὴ οὐδαμῇ κοινωνεῖ θεωρίας.— Arist. Eth. Lib. 10th. The concluding book of the Ethics should be carefully read. It is all most valuable.

CHAPTER XII.

OF VITAL BEAUTY. FIRST, AS RELATIVE.

I PROCEED more particularly to examine the nature of that second kind of beauty of which I spoke in the third chapter, as consisting in "the appearance of felicitous fulfilment of function in living things." I have already noticed the example of very pure and high typical beauty which is to be found in the lines and gradations of unsullied snow: if, passing to the edge of a sheet of it, upon the lower Alps, early in May, we find, as we are nearly sure to find, two or three little round openings pierced in it, and through these emergent, a slender, pensive, fragile flower* whose small dark, purple-fringed bell hangs down and shudders over the icy cleft that it has cloven, as if partly wondering at its own recent grave, and partly dying of very fatigue after its hard won victory; we shall be, or we ought to be, moved by a totally different impression of loveliness from that which we receive among the dead ice and the idle clouds. There is now uttered to us a call for sympathy, now offered to us an image of moral purpose and achievement, which, however unconscious or senseless the creature may indeed be that so seems to call, cannot be heard without affection, nor contemplated without worship, by any of us whose heart is rightly tuned, or whose mind is clearly and surely sighted.

§ 1. Transition from typical to vital Beauty.

Throughout the whole of the organic creation every being in a perfect state exhibits certain appearances, or evidences, of happiness, and besides is in its nature, its desires, its modes of nourishment, habitation, and death, illustrative or expressive of certain moral dispositions or principles. Now, first, in the keenness of the sympathy which we feel in the happiness, real or

* Soldanella Alpina.

apparent, of all organic beings, and which, as we shall presently see, invariably prompts us, from the joy we have in it, to look upon those as most lovely which are most happy; and secondly, in the justness of the moral sense which rightly reads the lesson they are all intended to teach, and classes them in orders of worthiness and beauty according to the rank and nature of that lesson, whether it be of warning or example, of those that wallow or of those that soar, of the fiend-hunted swine by the Gennesaret lake, or of the dove returning to its ark of rest; in our right accepting and reading of all this, consists, I say, the ultimately perfect condition of that noble theoretic faculty, whose place in the system of our nature I have already partly vindicated with respect to typical, but which can only fully be established with respect to vital beauty.

Its first perfection, therefore, relating to vital beauty, is the kindness and unselfish fulness of heart, which receives the utmost amount of pleasure from the happiness of all things. Of which in high degree the heart of man is incapable, neither what intense enjoyment the angels may have in all that they see of things that move and live, and in the part they take in the shedding of God's kindness upon them, can we know or conceive: only in proportion as we draw near to God, and are made in measure like unto him, can we increase this our possession of charity, of which the entire essence is in God only.

§ 2. The perfection of the theoretic faculty as concerned with vital beauty, is charity.

Wherefore it is evident that even the ordinary exercise of this faculty implies a condition of the whole moral being in some measure right and healthy, and that to the entire exercise of it there is necessary the entire perfection of the Christian character, for he who loves not God, nor his brother, cannot love the grass beneath his feet and the creatures that fill those spaces in the universe which he needs not, and which live not for his uses; nay, he has seldom grace to be grateful even to those that love him and serve him, while, on the other hand, none can love God nor his human brother without loving all things which his Father loves, nor without looking upon them every one as in that respect his brethren also, and perhaps worthier than he, if in the under concords they have to fill, their part is touched more truly. Wherefore it is good to read of that kindness and

humbleness of St. Francis of Assisi, who spoke never to bird nor to cicala, nor even to wolf and beast of prey, but as his brother; and so we find are moved the minds of all good and mighty men, as in the lesson that we have from the Mariner of Coleridge, and yet more truly and rightly taught in the Heartleap well,

> "Never to blend our pleasure, or our pride,
> With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels,"

and again in the White Doe of Rylstone, with the added teaching of that gift, which we have from things beneath us, in thanks for the love they cannot equally return; that anguish of our own,

> "Is tempered and allayed by sympathies,
> Aloft ascending and descending deep,
> Even to the inferior kinds,"

so that I know not of anything more destructive of the whole theoretic faculty, not to say of the Christian character and human intellect, than those accursed sports in which man makes of himself, cat, tiger, serpent, chaetodon, and alligator in one, and gathers into one continuance of cruelty for his amusement all the devices that brutes sparingly and at intervals use against each other for their necessities.*

§ 3. Only with respect to plants, less affection than sympathy.

As we pass from those beings of whose happiness and pain we are certain to those in which it is doubtful or only seeming, as possibly in plants, (though I would fain hold, if I might, "the faith that every flower, enjoys the air it breathes," neither do I ever crush or gather one without some pain,) yet our feeling for them has in it more of sympathy than of actual love, as receiving from them in delight far more than we can give; for love, I think, chiefly grows in giving, at least its essence is the desire of doing good, or giving happiness, and we cannot feel the desire of that which we cannot conceive, so that if we conceive not of a

* I would have Mr. Landseer, before he gives us any more writhing otters, or yelping packs, reflect whether that which is best worthy of contemplation in a hound be its ferocity, or in an otter its agony, or in a human being its victory, hardly achieved even with the aid of its more sagacious brutal allies over a poor little fish-catching creature, a foot long.

plant as capable of pleasure, we cannot desire to give it pleasure, that is, we cannot love it in the entire sense of the term.

Nevertheless, the sympathy of very lofty and sensitive minds usually reaches so far as to the conception of life in the plant, and so to love, as with Shelley, of the sensitive plant, and Shakspeare always, as he has taught us in the sweet voices of Ophelia and Perdita, and Wordsworth always, as of the daffodils, and the celandine.

> "It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold.
> This neither is its courage, nor its choice,
> But its necessity in being old,"—

and so all other great poets (that is to say, great seers ;*) nor do I believe that any mind, however rude, is without some slight perception or acknowledgment of joyfulness in breathless things, as most certainly there are none but feel instinctive delight in the appearances of such enjoyment.

§ 4. Which is proportioned to the appearance of energy in the plants.

For it is matter of easy demonstration, that setting the characters of typical beauty aside, the pleasure afforded by every organic form is in proportion to its appearance of healthy vital energy ; as in a rose-bush, setting aside all considerations of gradated flushing of color and fair folding of line, which it shares with the cloud or the snow-wreath, we find in and through all this, certain signs pleasant and acceptable as signs of life and enjoyment in the particular individual plant itself. Every leaf and stalk is seen to have a function, to be constantly exercising that function, and as it seems *solely* for the good and enjoyment of the plant. It is true that reflection will show us that the plant is not living for itself alone, that its life is one of benefaction, that it gives as well as receives, but no sense of this whatsoever mingles with our perception of physical beauty in its forms. Those forms which appear to be necessary to its health, the symmetry of its leaflets, the smoothness of its stalks, the vivid green of its shoots, are looked upon by us as signs of the plant's own happiness and perfection ; they are useless to us, except as they give us

* Compare Milton.

> "They at her coming sprung
> And touched by her fair tendance, gladlier grew"

pleasure in our sympathizing with that of the plant, and if we see a leaf withered or shrunk or worm-eaten, we say it is ugly, and feel it to be most painful, not because it hurts *us*, but because it seems to hurt the plant, and conveys to us an idea of pain and disease and failure of life in *it*.

That the amount of pleasure we receive is in exact proportion to the appearance of vigor and sensibility in the plant, is easily proved by observing the effect of those which show the evidences of it in the least degree, as, for instance, any of the cacti not in flower. Their masses are heavy and simple, their growth slow, their various parts jointed on one to another, as if they were buckled or pinned together instead of growing out of each other, (note the singular imposition in many of them, the prickly pear for instance, of the fruit upon the body of the plant, so that it looks like a swelling or disease,) and often farther opposed by harsh truncation of line as in the cactus truncatophylla. All these circumstances so concur to deprive the plant of vital evidences, that we receive from it more sense of pain than of beauty; and yet even here, the sharpness of the angles, the symmetrical order and strength of the spines, the fresh and even color of the body, are looked for earnestly as signs of healthy condition, our pain is increased by their absence, and indefinitely increased if blotches, and other appearances of bruise and decay interfere with that little life which the plant seems to possess.

The same singular characters belong in animals to the crustacea, as to the lobster, crab, scorpion, etc., and in great measure deprive them of the beauty which we find in higher orders, so that we are reduced to look for their beauty to single parts and joints, and not to the whole animal.

Now I wish particularly to impress upon the reader that all these sensations of beauty in the plant arise from our unselfish sympathy with its happiness, and not from any view of the qualities in it which may bring good to us, nor even from our acknowledgment in it of any moral condition beyond that of mere felicity; for such an acknowledgment, belongs to the second operation of the theoretic faculty (compare § 2,) and not to the sympathetic part which we are at present examining; so that we even find

§5. This sympathy is unselfish, and does not regard utility.

that in this respect, the moment we begin to look upon any creature as subordinate to some purpose out of itself, some of the sense of organic beauty is lost. Thus, when we are told that the leaves of a plant are occupied in decomposing carbonic acid, and preparing oxygen for us, we begin to look upon it with some such indifference as upon a gasometer. It has become a machine; some of our sense of its happiness is gone; its emanation of inherent life is no longer pure. The bending trunk, waving to and fro in the wind above the waterfall, is beautiful because it is happy, though it is perfectly useless to us. The same trunk, hewn down and thrown across the stream, has lost its beauty. It serves as a bridge,—it has become useful; it lives not for itself, and its beauty is gone, or what it retains is purely typical, dependent on its lines and colors, not on its functions. Saw it into planks, and though now adapted to become permanently useful, its whole beauty is lost forever, or to be regained only in part when decay and ruin shall have withdrawn it again from use, and left it to receive from the hand of nature the velvet moss and varied lichen, which may again suggest ideas of inherent happiness, and tint its mouldering sides with hues of life.

There is something, I think, peculiarly beautiful and instructive in this unselfishness of the theoretic faculty, and in its abhorrence of all utility which is based on the pain or destruction of any creature, for in such ministering to each other as is consistent with the essence and energy of both, it takes delight, as in the clothing of the rock by the herbage, and the feeding of the herbage by the stream.

§ 6. Especially with respect to animals.

But still more distinct evidence of its being indeed the expression of happiness to which we look for our first pleasure in organic form, is to be found in the way in which we regard the bodily frame of animals: of which it is to be noted first, that there is not anything which causes so intense and tormenting a sense of ugliness as any scar, wound, monstrosity, or imperfection which seems inconsistent with the animal's ease and health; and that although in vegetables, where there is no immediate sense of pain, we are comparatively little hurt by excrescences and irregularities, but are sometimes even delighted with them, and fond of them, as

children of the oak-apple, and sometimes look upon them as more interesting than the uninjured conditions, as in the gnarled and knotted trunks of trees; yet the slightest approach to anything of the kind in animal form is regarded with intense horror, merely from the sense of pain it conveys. And, in the second place, it is to be noted that whenever we dissect the animal frame, or conceive it as dissected, and substitute in our ideas the neatness of mechanical contrivance for the pleasure of the animal; the moment we reduce enjoyment to ingenuity, and volition to leverage, that instant all sense of beauty disappears. Take, for instance, the action of the limb of the ostrich, which is beautiful so long as we see it in its swift uplifting along the desert sands, and trace in the tread of it her scorn of the horse and his rider, but would infinitely lose of its impressiveness, if we could see the spring ligament playing backwards and forwards in alternate jerks over the tubercle at the hock joint. Take again the action of the dorsal fin of the shark tribe. So long as we observe the uniform energy of motion in the whole frame, the lash of the tail, bound of body, and instantaneous lowering of the dorsal, to avoid the resistance of the water as it turns, there is high sense of organic power and beauty. But when we dissect the dorsal, and find that its superior ray is supported in its position by a peg in a notch at its base, and that when the fin is to be lowered, the peg has to be taken out, and when it is raised put in again; although we are filled with wonder at the ingenuity of the mechanical contrivance, all our sense of beauty is gone, and not to be recovered until we again see the fin playing on the animal's body, apparently by its own will alone, with the life running along its rays. It is by a beautiful ordinance of the Creator that all these mechanisms are concealed from sight, though open to investigation, and that in all which is outwardly manifested we seem to see his presence rather than his workmanship, and the mysterious breath of life, rather than the manipulation of matter.

§ 7. And it is destroyed by evidences of mechanism.

As, therefore, it appears from all evidence that it is the sense of felicity which we first desire in organic form, it is evident from reason, as demonstrable by experience, that those forms will be the most beautiful (always, observe, leaving typical

beauty out of the question) which exhibit most of power, and seem capable of most quick and joyous sensation. Hence we find gradations of beauty from the apparent impenetrableness of hide and slow motion of the elephant and rhinoceros, from the foul occupation of the vulture, from the earthy struggling of the worm, to the brilliancy of the butterfly, the buoyancy of the lark, the swiftness of the fawn and the horse, the fair and kingly sensibility of man.

§ 8. The second perfection of the theoretic faculty as concerned with life is justice of moral judgment.

Thus far then, the theoretic faculty is concerned with the happiness of animals, and its exercise depends on the cultivation of the affections only. Let us next observe how it is concerned with the moral functions of animals, and therefore how it is dependent on the cultivation of every moral sense. There is not any organic creature, but in its history and habits it shall exemplify or illustrate to us some moral excellence or deficiency, or some point of God's providential government, which it is necessary for us to know. Thus the functions and the fates of animals are distributed to them, with a variety which exhibits to us the dignity and results of almost every passion and kind of conduct, some filthy and slothful, pining and unhappy; some rapacious, restless, and cruel; some ever earnest and laborious, and, I think, unhappy in their endless labor, creatures, like the bee, that heap up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them, and others employed like angels in endless offices of love and praise. Of which when, in right condition of mind, we esteem those most beautiful, whose functions are the most noble, whether as some, in mere energy, or as others, in moral honor, so that we look with hate on the foulness of the sloth, and the subtlety of the adder, and the rage of the hyena: with the honor due to their earthly wisdom we invest the earnest ant and unwearied bee; but we look with full perception of sacred function to the tribes of burning plumage and choral voice.* And so what lesson we might receive for our earthly conduct from the creeping and laborious things, was taught us by that earthly king who made silver to be in Jerusa-

* "Type of the wise—who soar, but never roam,
True to the kindred points of heaven and home."
(WORDSWORTH.—To the Skylark.)

lem as stones (yet thereafter was less rich towards God). But from the lips of an heavenly King, who had not where to lay his head, we were taught what lesson we have to learn from those higher creatures who sow not, nor reap, nor gather into barns, for their Heavenly Father feedeth them.

There is much difficulty in the way of our looking with this rightly balanced judgment on the moral functions of the animal tribes, owing to the independent and often opposing characters of typical beauty, which are among them, as it seems, arbitrarily distributed, so that the most fierce and cruel are often clothed in the liveliest colors, and strengthened by the noblest forms, with this only exception, that so far as I know, there is no high beauty in any slothful animal, but even among those of prey, its characters exist in exalted measure upon those that range and pursue, and are in equal degree withdrawn from those that lie subtly and silently in the covert of the reed and fens. But that mind only is fully disciplined in its theoretic power, which can, when it chooses, throwing off the sympathies and repugnancies with which the ideas of destructiveness or of innocence accustom us to regard the animal tribes, as well as those meaner likes and dislikes which arise, I think, from the greater or less resemblance of animal powers to our own, can pursue the pleasures of typical beauty down to the scales of the alligator, the coils of the serpent, and the joints of the beetle; and again, on the other hand, regardless of the impressions of typical beauty, accept from each creature, great or small, the more important lessons taught by its position in creation as sufferer or chastiser, as lowly or having dominion, as of foul habit or lofty aspiration, and from the several perfections which all illustrate or possess, courage, perseverance, industry, or intelligence, or, higher yet, of love and patience, and fidelity and rejoicing, and never wearied praise. Which moral perfections that they indeed are productive, in proportion to their expression, of instant beauty instinctively felt, is best proved by comparing those parts of animals in which they are definitely expressed, as for instance the eye, of which we shall find those ugliest which have in them no expression nor life whatever, but a corpse-like stare, or an indefinite meaningless glaring, as in some lights, those of

§ 9. How impeded.

§ 10. The influence of moral signs in expression.

owls and cats, and mostly of insects and of all creatures in which the eye seems rather an external, optical instrument than a bodily member through which emotion and virtue of soul may be expressed, (as pre-eminently in the chameleon,) because the seeming want of sensibility and vitality in a living creature is the most painful of all wants. And next to these in ugliness come the eyes that gain vitality indeed, but only by means of the expression of intense malignity, as in the serpent and alligator; and next to these, to whose malignity is added the virtue of subtlety and keenness, as of the lynx and hawk; and then, by diminishing the malignity and increasing the expressions of comprehensiveness and determination, we arrive at those of the lion and eagle, and at last, by destroying malignity altogether, at the fair eye of the herbivorous tribes, wherein the superiority of beauty consists always in the greater or less sweetness and gentleness primarily, as in the gazelle, camel, and ox, and in the greater or less intellect, secondarily, as in the horse and dog, and finally, in gentleness and intellect both in man. And again, taking the mouth, another source of expression, we find it ugliest where it has none, as mostly in fish, or perhaps where without gaining much in expression of any kind, it becomes a formidable destructive instrument, as again in the alligator, and then, by some increase of expression, we arrive at birds' beaks, wherein there is more obtained by the different ways of setting on the mandibles than is commonly supposed, (compare the bills of the duck and the eagle,) and thence we reach the finely developed lips of the carnivora, which nevertheless lose that beauty they have, in the actions of snarling and biting, and from these we pass to the nobler because gentler and more sensible, of the horse, camel, and fawn, and so again up to man, only there is less traceableness of the principle in the mouths of the lower animals, because they are in slight measure only capable of expression, and chiefly used as instruments, and that of low function, whereas in man the mouth is given most definitely as a means of expression, beyond and above its lower functions. Compare the remarks of Sir Charles Bell on this subject in his Essay on Expression, and compare the mouth of the negro head given by him (p. 28, third edition) with that of Raffaelle's St. Catherine. I shall illustrate the subject farther hereafter by

giving the mouth of one of the demons of Orcagna's Inferno, with projecting incisors, and that of a fish and a swine, in opposition to pure graminivorous and human forms; but at present it is sufficient for my purpose to insist on the single great principle, that, wherever expression is possible, and uninterfered with by characters of typical beauty, which confuse the subject exceedingly as regards the mouth, (for the typical beauty of the carnivorous lips is on a grand scale, while it exists in very low degree in the beaks of birds,) wherever, I say, these considerations do not interfere, the beauty of the animal form is in exact proportion to the amount of moral or intellectual virtue expressed by it; and wherever beauty exists at all, there is some kind of virtue to which it is owing, as the majesty of the lion's eye is owing not to its ferocity, but to its seriousness and seeming intellect, and of the lion's mouth to its strength and sensibility, and not its gnashing of teeth, nor wrinkling in its wrath; and farther be it noted, that of the intellectual or moral virtues, the moral are those which are attended with most beauty, so that the gentle eye of the gazelle is fairer to look upon than the more keen glance of men, if it be unkind.

§ 11. As also in plants.

Of the parallel effects of expression upon plants there is little to be noted, as the mere naming of the subject cannot but bring countless illustrations to the mind of every reader: only this, that, as we saw they were less susceptible of our sympathetic love, owing to the absence in them of capability of enjoyment, so they are less open to the affections based upon the expression of moral virtue, owing to their want of volition; so that even on those of them which are deadly and unkind we look not without pleasure, the more because this their evil operation cannot be by them outwardly expressed, but only by us empirically known; so that of the outward seemings and expressions of plants, there are few but are in some way good and therefore beautiful, as of humility, and modesty, and love of places and things, in the reaching out of their arms, and clasping of their tendrils; and energy of resistance, and patience of suffering, and beneficence one towards another in shade and protection, and to us also in scents and fruits (for of their healing virtues, however important to us, there is no more outward sense nor seeming than of their properties mortal or dangerous).

Whence, in fine, looking to the whole kingdom of organic nature, we find that our full receiving of its beauty depends first on the sensibility and then on the accuracy and touchstone faithfulness of the heart in its moral judgments, so that it is necessary that we should not only love all creatures well, but esteem them in that order which is according to God's laws and not according to our own human passions and predilections, not looking for swiftness, and strength, and cunning, rather than for patience and kindness, still less delighting in their animosity and cruelty one towards another, neither, if it may be avoided, interfering with the working of nature in any way, nor, when we interfere to obtain service, judging from the morbid conditions of the animal or vegetable so induced; for we see every day the theoretic faculty entirely destroyed in those who are interested in particular animals, by their delight in the results of their own teaching, and by the vain straining of curiosity for new forms such as nature never intended, as the disgusting types for instance, which we see earnestly sought for by the fanciers of rabbits and pigeons, and constantly in horses, substituting for the true and balanced beauty of the free creature some morbid development of a single power, as of swiftness in the racer, at the expense, in certain measure, of the animal's healthy constitution and fineness of form; and so the delight of horticulturists in the spoiling of plants; so that in all cases we are to beware of such opinions as seem in any way referable to human pride, or even to the grateful or pernicious influence of things upon ourselves, and to cast the mind free, and out of ourselves, humbly, and yet always in that noble position of pause above the other visible creatures, nearer God than they, which we authoritatively hold, thence looking down upon them, and testing the clearness of our moral vision by the extent, and fulness, and constancy of our pleasure in the light of God's love as it embraces them, and the harmony of his holy laws, that forever bring mercy out of rapine, and religion out of wrath.

§ 12. Recapitulation.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF VITAL BEAUTY.—SECONDLY AS GENERIC.

HITHERTO we have observed the conclusions of the theoretic faculty with respect to the relations of happiness, and of more or less exalted function existing between different orders of organic being. But we must pursue the inquiry farther yet, and observe what impressions of beauty are connected with more or less perfect fulfilment of the appointed function by different individuals of the same species. We are now no longer called to pronounce upon worthiness of occupation or dignity of disposition; but both employment and capacity being known, and the animal's position and duty fixed, we have to regard it in that respect alone, comparing it with other individuals of its species, and to determine how far it worthily executes its office; whether, if scorpion, it hath poison enough, or if tiger, strength enough, or if dove, innocence enough, to sustain rightly its place in creation, and come up to the perfect idea of dove, tiger, or scorpion.

§ 1. The beauty of fulfilment of appointed function in every animal.

In the first or sympathetic operation of the theoretic faculty, it will be remembered, we receive pleasure from the signs of mere happiness in living things. In the second theoretic operation of comparing and judging, we constituted ourselves such judges of the lower creatures as Adam was made by God when they were brought to him to be named, and we allowed of beauty in them as they reached, more or less, to that standard of moral perfection by which we test ourselves. But, in the third place, we are to come down again from the judgment seat, and taking it for granted that every creature of God is in some way good, and has a duty and specific operation providentially accessory to the well-being of all, we are to look in this faith to that employment and nature of each, and to derive pleasure from their entire perfection and fitness for the duty they have to do, and in their entire fulfilment of it: and so we are to take pleasure and

find beauty in the magnificent binding together of the jaws of the ichthyosaurus for catching and holding, and in the adaptation of the lion for springing, and of the locust for destroying, and of the lark for singing, and in every creature for the doing of that which God has made it to do. Which faithful pleasure in the perception of the perfect operation of lower creatures I have placed last among the perfections of the theoretic faculty concerning them, because it is commonly last acquired, both owing to the humbleness and trustfulness of heart which it demands, and because it implies a knowledge of the habits and structure of every creature, such as we can but imperfectly possess.

The perfect *idea* of the form and condition in which all the properties of the species are fully developed, is called the ideal of the species. The question of the nature of ideal conception of species, and of the mode in which the mind arrives at it, has been the subject of so much discussion, and source of so much embarrassment, chiefly owing to that unfortunate distinction between idealism and realism which leads most people to imagine the ideal opposed to the real, and therefore *false*, that I think it necessary to request the reader's most careful attention to the following positions.

§ 2. The two senses of the word "ideal." Either it refers to action of the imagination.

Any work of art which represents, not a material object, but the mental conception of a material object, is, in the primary sense of the word ideal; that is to say, it represents an idea, and not a thing. Any work of art which represents or realizes a material object, is, in the primary sense of the term, unideal.

Ideal works of art, therefore, in this first sense, represent the result of an act of imagination, and are good or bad in proportion to the healthy condition and general power of the imagination, whose acts they represent.

Unideal works of art (the studious production of which is termed realism) represent actual existing things, and are good or bad in proportion to the perfection of the representation.

All entirely bad works of art may be divided into those which, professing to be imaginative, bear no stamp of imagination, and are therefore false, and those which, professing to be representative of matter, miss of the representation and are therefore nugatory.

It is the habit of most observers to regard art as representative of matter, and to look only for the entireness of representation; and it was to this view of art that I limited the arguments of the former sections of the present work, wherein having to oppose the conclusions of a criticism entirely based upon the realist system, I was compelled to meet that criticism on its own grounds. But the greater part of works of art, more especially those devoted to the expression of ideas of beauty, are the results of the agency of imagination, their worthiness depending, as above stated, on the healthy condition of the imagination.

Hence it is necessary for us, in order to arrive at conclusions respecting the worthiness of such works, to define and examine the nature of the imaginative faculty, and to determine first what are the signs or conditions of its existence at all; and secondly, what are the evidences of its healthy and efficient existence, upon which examination I shall enter in the second section of the present part.

But there is another sense of the word ideal besides this, and it is that with which we are here concerned. It is evident that, so long as we use the word to signify that art which represents ideas and not things, we may use it as truly of the art which represents an idea of Caliban, and not real Caliban, as of the art which represents an idea of Antinous, and not real Antinous. For that is as much imagination which conceives the monster as which conceives the man. If, however, Caliban and Antinous be creatures of the same species, and the form of the one contain not the fully developed types or characters of the species, while the form of the other presents the greater part of them, then the latter is said to be a form more ideal than the other, as a nearer approximation to the general idea or conception of the species.

§ 3. Or to perfection of type.

Now it is evident that this use of the word ideal is much less accurate than the other, from which it is derived, for it rests on the assumption that the assemblage of all the characters of a species in their perfect development cannot exist but in the imagination. For if it can actually and in reality exist, it is not right to call it ideal or imaginary; it would be better to call it characteristic or

§ 4. This last sense how inaccurate, yet to be retained.

general, and to reserve the word ideal for the results of the operation of the imagination, either on the perfect or imperfect forms.

Nevertheless, the word ideal has been so long and universally accepted in this sense, that I think it better to continue the use of it, so only that the reader will be careful to observe the distinction in the sense, according to the subject matter under discussion. At present then, using it as expressive of the noble generic form which indicates the full perfection of the creature in all its functions, I wish to examine how far this perception exists or may exist in nature, and if not in nature, how it is by us discoverable or imaginable.

Now it is better, when we wish to arrive at truth, always to take familiar instances, wherein the mind is not likely to be biassed by any elevated associations or favorite theories. Let us ask therefore, first, what kind of ideal form may be attributed to a limpet or an oyster, that is to say, whether all oysters do or do not come up to the entire notion or idea of an oyster. I apprehend that, although in respect of size, age, and kind of feeding, there may be some difference between them, yet of those which are of full size and healthy condition there will be found many which fulfil the conditions of an oyster in every respect, and that so perfectly, that we could not, by combining the features of two or more together, produce a more perfect oyster than any that we see. I suppose also, that, out of a number of healthy fish, birds, or beasts of the same species, it would not be easy to select an individual as superior to *all* the rest; neither by comparing two or more of the nobler examples together, to arrive at the conception of a form superior to that of either; but that, though the accidents of more abundant food or more fitting habitation may induce among them some varieties of size, strength, and color, yet the entire generic form would be presented by many, neither would any art be able to add to or diminish from it.

§ 5. Of Ideal form. First, in the lower animals.

It is, therefore, hardly right to use the word ideal of the generic forms of these creatures, of which we see actual examples; but if we are to use it, then be it distinctly understood that their ideality consists in the full development of all the powers and properties of the creature as such, and

§ 6. In what consistent.

is inconsistent with accidental or imperfect developments, and even with great variation from average size, the ideal size being neither gigantic nor diminutive, but the utmost grandeur and entireness of proportion at a certain point above the mean size; for as more individuals always fall short of generic size than rise above it, the generic is above the average or mean size. And this perfection of the creature invariably involves the utmost possible degree of all those properties of beauty, both typical and vital, which it is appointed to possess.

§ 7. Ideal form in vegetables.

Let us next observe the conditions of ideality in vegetables. Out of a large number of primroses or violets, I apprehend that, although one or two might be larger than all the rest, the greater part would be very sufficient primroses and violets. And that we could, by no study nor combination of violets, conceive of a better violet than many in the bed. And so generally of the blossoms and separate members of all vegetables.

But among the entire forms of the complex vegetables, as of oak-trees, for instance, there exists very large and constant difference, some being what we hold to be fine oaks, as in parks, and places where they are taken care of, and have their own way, and some are but poor and mean oaks, which have had no one to take care of them, but have been obliged to maintain themselves.

That which we have to determine is, whether ideality be predicable of the fine oaks only, or whether the poor and mean oaks also may be considered as ideal, that is, coming up to the conditions of oak, and the general notion of oak.

§ 8. The difference of position between plants and animals.

Now there is this difference between the positions held in creation by animals and plants, and thence in the dispositions with which we regard them; that the animals, being for the most part locomotive, are capable both of living where they choose, and of obtaining what food they want, and of fulfilling all the conditions necessary to their health and perfection. For which reason they are answerable for such health and perfection, and we should be displeased and hurt if we did not find it in one individual as well as another.

But the case is evidently different with plants. They are intended fixedly to occupy many places comparatively unfit for them, and to fill up all the spaces where greenness, and coolness,

and ornament, and oxygen are wanted, and that with very little reference to their comfort or convenience. Now it would be hard upon the plant if, after being tied to a particular spot, where it is indeed much wanted, and is a great blessing, but where it has enough to do to live, whence it cannot move to obtain what it wants or likes, but must stretch its unfortunate arms here and there for bare breath and light, and split its way among rocks, and grope for sustenance in unkindly soil; it would be hard upon the plant, I say, if under all these disadvantages, it were made answerable for its appearance, and found fault with because it was not a fine plant of the kind. And so we find it ordained that in order that no unkind comparisons may be drawn between one and another, there are not appointed to plants the fixed number, position, and proportion of members which are ordained in animals, (and any variation from which in these is unpardonable,) but a continually varying number and position, even among the more freely growing examples, admitting therefore all kinds of license to those which have enemies to contend with, and that without in any way detracting from their dignity and perfection.

§ 9. Admits of variety in the ideal of the former.

So then there is in trees no perfect form which can be fixed upon or reasoned out as ideal; but that is always an ideal oak which, however poverty-stricken, or hunger-pinched, or tempest-tortured, is yet seen to have done, under its appointed circumstances, all that could be expected of oak.

The ideal, therefore, of the park oak is that to which I alluded in the conclusion of the former part of this work, full size, united terminal curve, equal and symmetrical range of branches on each side. The ideal of the mountain oak may be anything, twisting, and leaning, and shattered, and rock-encumbered, so only that amidst all its misfortunes, it maintain the dignity of oak; and, indeed, I look upon this kind of tree as more ideal than the other, in so far as by its efforts and struggles, more of its nature, enduring power, patience in waiting for, and ingenuity in obtaining what it wants, is brought out, and so more of the essence of oak exhibited, than under more fortunate conditions.

And herein, then, we at last find the cause of that fact which

we have twice already noted, that the exalted or seemingly improved condition, whether of plant or animal, induced by human interference, is not the true and artistical ideal of it.* It has been well shown by Dr. Herbert,† that many plants are found alone on a certain soil or subsoil in a wild state, not because such soil is favorable to them, but because they alone are capable of existing on it, and because all dangerous rivals are by its inhospitality removed. Now if we withdraw the plant from this position, which it hardly endures, and supply it with the earth, and maintain about it the temperature that it delights in; withdrawing from it at the same time all rivals which, in such conditions nature would have thrust upon it, we shall indeed obtain a magnificently developed example of the plant, colossal in size, and splendid in organization, but we shall utterly lose in it that moral ideal which is dependent on its right fulfilment of its appointed functions. It was intended and created by the Deity for the covering of those lonely spots where no other plant could live; it has been thereto endowed with courage, and strength, and capacities of endurance unequalled; its character and glory are not therefore in the gluttonous and idle feeling of its own over luxuriance, at the expense of other creatures utterly destroyed and rooted out for its good alone, but in its right doing of its hard duty, and forward climbing into those spots of forlorn hope where it alone can bear witness to the kindness and presence of the Spirit that cutteth out rivers among the rocks, as it covers the valleys with corn: and there, in its vanward place, and only there, where nothing is withdrawn for it, nor hurt by it, and where nothing can take part of its honor, nor usurp its throne, are its strength, and fairness, and price, and goodness in the sight of God, to be truly esteemed.

§ 10. Ideal form in vegetables destroyed by cultivation.

* I speak not here of those conditions of vegetation which have especial reference to man, as of seeds and fruits, whose sweetness and farina seem in great measure given, not for the plant's sake, but for his, and to which therefore the interruption in the harmony of creation of which he was the cause is extended, and their sweetness and larger measure of good to be obtained only by his redeeming labor. His curse has fallen on the corn and the vine, and the wild barley misses of its fulness, that he may eat bread by the sweat of his brow.

† Journal of the Horticultural Society. Part I.

The first time that I saw the soldanella alpina, before spoken of, it was growing, of magnificent size, on a sunny Alpine pasture, among bleating of sheep and lowing of cattle, associated with a profusion of geum montanum, and ranunculus pyrenæus. I noticed it only because new to me, nor perceived any peculiar beauty in its cloven flower. Some days after, I found it alone, among the rack of the higher clouds, and howling of glacier winds, and, as I described it, piercing through an edge of avalanche, which in its retiring had left the new ground brown and lifeless, and as if burned by recent fire; the plant was poor and feeble, and seemingly exhausted with its efforts, but it was then that I comprehended its ideal character, and saw its noble function and order of glory among the constellations of the earth.

§ 11. Instance in the Soldanella and Ranunculus.

The ranunculus glacialis might perhaps, by cultivation, be blanched from its wan and corpse-like paleness to purer white, and won to more branched and lofty development of its ragged leaves. But the ideal of the plant is to be found only in the last, loose stones of the moraine, alone there; wet with the cold, unkindly drip of the glacier water, and trembling as the loose and steep dust to which it clings yields ever and anon, and shudders and crumbles away from about its root.

And if it be asked how this conception of the utmost beauty of ideal form is consistent with what we formerly argued respecting the pleasantness of the appearance of felicity in the creature, let it be observed, and forever held, that the right and true happiness of every creature, is in this very discharge of its function, and in those efforts by which its strength and inherent energy are developed: and that the repose of which we also spoke as necessary to all beauty, is, as was then stated, repose not of inanition, nor of luxury, nor of irresolution, but the repose of magnificent energy and being; in action, the calmness of trust and determination; in rest, the consciousness of duty accomplished and of victory won, and this repose and this felicity can take place as well in the midst of trial and tempest, as beside the waters of comfort; they perish only when the creature is either unfaithful to itself, or is afflicted by circumstances unnatural and malignant to its being, and for the contending with

§ 12. The beauty of repose and felicity, how consistent with such ideal.

which it was neither fitted nor ordained. Hence that rest which is indeed glorious is of the chamois couched breathless on his granite bed, not of the stalled ox over his fodder, and that happiness which is indeed beautiful is in the bearing of those trial tests which are appointed for the proving of every creature, whether it be good, or whether it be evil; and in the fulfilment to the uttermost of every command it has received, and the out-carrying to the uttermost of every power and gift it has gotten from its God.

Therefore the task of the painter in his pursuit of ideal form is to attain accurate knowledge, so far as may be in his power, of the character, habits, and peculiar virtues and duties of every species of being; down even to the stone, for there is an ideality of stones according to their kind, an ideality of granite and slate and marble, and it is in the utmost and most exalted exhibition of such individual character, order, and use, that all ideality of art consists. The more cautious he is in assigning the right species of moss to its favorite trunk, and the right kind of weed to its necessary stone, in marking the definite and characteristic leaf, blossom, seed, fracture, color, and inward anatomy of everything, the more truly ideal his work becomes. All confusion of species, all careless rendering of character, all unnatural and arbitrary association, is vulgar and unideal in proportion to its degree.

§ 13. The ideality of Art.

It is to be noted, however, that nature sometimes in a measure herself conceals these generic differences, and that when she displays them it is commonly on a scale too small for human hand to follow.

§ 14. How connected with the imaginative faculties.

The pursuit and seizure of the generic differences in their concealment, and the display of them on a larger and more palpable scale, is one of the wholesome and healthy operations of the imagination of which we are presently to speak.*

Generic differences being commonly exhibited by art in different manner and way from that of their natural occurrence, are in this respect more strictly and truly ideal in art than in reality.

This only remains to be noted, that, of all creatures whose

* Compare Sect. II. Chap. IV.

existence involves birth, progress, and dissolution, ideality is predicable all through their existence, so that they be perfect with reference to their supposed period of being. Thus there is an ideal of infancy, of youth, of old age, of death, and of decay. But when the ideal form of the species is spoken of or conceived in general terms, the form is understood to be of that period when the generic attributes are perfectly developed, and previous to the commencement of their decline. At which period all the characters of vital and typical beauty are commonly most concentrated in them, though the arrangement and proportion of these characters varies at different periods, youth having more of the vigorous beauty, and age of the reposing; youth of typical outward fairness, and age of expanded and etherealized moral expression; the babe, again, in some measure atoning in gracefulness for its want of strength, so that the balanced glory of the creature continues in solemn interchange, perhaps even

§ 15. Ideality, how belonging to ages and conditions.

> "Filling more and more with crystal light,
> As pensive evening deepens into night."

Hitherto, however, we have confined ourselves to the examination of ideal form in the lower animals, and we have found that, to arrive at it, no combination of forms nor exertion of fancy is required, but only simple choice among those naturally presented, together with careful investigation and anatomizing of the habits of the creatures. I fear we shall arrive at a very different conclusion, in considering the ideal form of man.

CHAPTER XIV.

OF VITAL BEAUTY.—THIRDLY, IN MAN.

HAVING thus passed gradually through all the orders and fields of creation, and traversed that goodly line of God's happy creatures who "leap not, but express a feast, where all the guests sit close, and nothing wants," without finding any deficiency which human invention might supply, nor any harm which human interference might mend, we come at last to set ourselves face to face with ourselves, expecting that in creatures made after the image of God we are to find comeliness and completion more exquisite than in the fowls of the air and the things that pass through the paths of the sea.

§ 1. Condition of the human creature entirely different from that of the lower animals.

But behold now a sudden change from all former experience. No longer among the individuals of the race is there equality or likeness, a distributed fairness and fixed type visible in each, but evil diversity, and terrible stamp of various degradation; features seamed with sickness, dimmed by sensuality, convulsed by passion, pinched by poverty, shadowed by sorrow, branded with remorse; bodies consumed with sloth, broken down by labor, tortured by disease, dishonored in foul uses; intellects without power, hearts without hope, minds earthly and devilish; our bones full of the sin of our youth, the heaven revealing our iniquity, the earth rising up against us, the roots dried up beneath, and the branch cut off above; well for us only, if, after beholding this our natural face in a glass, we desire not straightway to forget what manner of men we be.

Herein there is at last something, and too much, for that short stopping intelligence and dull perception of ours to accomplish, whether in earnest fact, or in the seeking for the outward image of beauty:—to undo the devil's work, to restore to the body the grace and the power which inherited disease has destroyed, to

§ 2. What room here for idealization.

return to the spirit the purity, and to the intellect the grasp that they had in Paradise. Now, first of all, this work, be it observed is in no respect a work of imagination. Wrecked we are, and nearly all to pieces; but that little good by which we are to redeem ourselves is to be got out of the old wreck, beaten about and full of sand though it be; and not out of that desert island of pride on which the devils split first, and we after them: and so the only restoration of the body that we can reach is not to be coined out of our fancies, but to be collected out of such uninjured and bright vestiges of the old seal as we can find and set together, and so the ideal of the features, as the good and perfect soul is seen in them, is not to be reached by imagination, but by the seeing and reaching forth of the better part of the soul to that of which it must first know the sweetness and goodness in itself, before it can much desire, or rightly find, the signs of it in others.

I say much desire and rightly find, because there is not any soul so sunk but that it shall in some measure feel the impression of mental beauty in the human features, and detest in others its own likeness, and in itself despise that which of itself it has made.

§ 3. How the conception of the bodily ideal is reached.

Now, of the ordinary process by which the realization of ideal bodily form is reached, there is explanation enough in all treatises on art, and it is so far well comprehended that I need not stay long to consider it. So far as the sight and knowledge of the human form, of the purest race, exercised from infancy constantly, but not excessively in all exercises of dignity, not in twists and straining dexterities, but in natural exercises of running, casting, or riding; practised in endurance, not of extraordinary hardship, for that hardens and degrades the body, but of natural hardship, vicissitudes of winter and summer, and cold and heat, yet in a climate where none of these are severe; surrounded also by a certain degree of right luxury, so as to soften and refine the forms of strength; so far as the sight of all this could render the mental intelligence of what is right in human form so acute as to be able to abstract and combine from the best examples so produced, that which was most perfect in each, so far the Greek conceived and attained the ideal of bodily form:

and on the Greek modes of attaining it, as well as on what he produced, as a perfect example of it, chiefly dwell those writers whose opinions on this subject I have collected; wholly losing sight of what seems to me the most important branch of the inquiry, namely, the influence for good or evil of the mind upon the bodily shape, the wreck of the mind itself, and the modes by which we may conceive of its restoration.

§ 4. Modifications of the bodily ideal owing to influence of mind. First, of intellect.

Now, the operation of the mind upon the body, and evidence of it thereon, may be considered under the following three general heads.

First, the operation of the intellectual powers upon the features, in the fine cutting and chiselling of them, and removal from them of signs of sensuality and sloth, by which they are blunted and deadened, and substitution of energy and intensity for vacancy and insipidity, (by which wants alone the faces of many fair women are utterly spoiled and rendered valueless,) and by the keenness given to the eye and fine moulding and development to the brow, of which effects Sir Charles Bell has well noted the desirableness and opposition to brutal types, (p. 59, third edition;) only this he has not sufficiently observed, that there are certain virtues of the intellect in measure inconsistent with each other, as perhaps great subtlety with great comprehensiveness, and high analytical with high imaginative power, or that at least, if consistent and compatible, their signs upon the features are not the same, so that the outward form cannot express both, without in a measure expressing neither; and so there are certain separate virtues of the outward form correspondent with the more constant employment or more prevailing capacity of the brain, as the piercing keenness, or open and reflective comprehensiveness of the eye and forehead, and that all these virtues of form are ideal, only those the most so which are the signs of the worthiest powers of intellect, though which these be, we will not at present stay to inquire.

The second point to be considered in the influence of mind upon body, is the mode of operation and conjunction of the moral feelings on and with the intellectual powers, and then their conjoint influence on the bodily form. Now, the operation of the right moral feel-

§ 5. Secondly, of the moral feelings.

ings on the intellect is always for the good of the latter, for it is not possible that selfishness should reason rightly in any respect, but must be blind in its estimation of the worthiness of all things, neither anger, for that overpowers the reason or outcries it, neither sensuality, for that overgrows and chokes it, neither agitation, for that has no time to compare things together, neither enmity, for that must be unjust, neither fear, for that exaggerates all things, neither cunning and deceit, for that which is voluntarily untrue will soon be unwittingly so: but the great reasoners are self-command, and trust unagitated, and deep-looking Love, and Faith, which as she is above Reason, so she best holds the reins of it from her high seat: so that they err grossly who think of the right development even of the intellectual type as possible, unless we look to higher sources of beauty first. Nevertheless, though in their operation *upon* them the moral feelings are thus elevatory of the mental faculties, yet in their conjunction *with* them they seem to occupy, in their own fulness, such room as to absorb and overshadow all else, so that the simultaneous exercise of both is in a sort impossible; for which cause we occasionally find the moral part in full development and action, without corresponding expanding of the intellect (though never without healthy condition of it,) as in that of Wordsworth,

> "In such high hour
> Of visitation from the Living God,
> Thought was not;"

only I think that if we look far enough, we shall find that it is not intelligence itself, but the immediate act and effort of a laborious, struggling, and imperfect intellectual faculty, with which high moral emotion is inconsistent; and that though we cannot, while we feel deeply, reason shrewdly, yet I doubt if, *except* when we feel deeply, we can ever comprehend fully; so that it is only the climbing and mole-like piercing, and not the sitting upon their central throne, nor emergence into light, of the intellectual faculties which the full heart feeling allows not. Hence, therefore, in the indications of the countenance, they are only the hard cut lines, and rigid settings, and wasted hollows, that speak of past effort and painfulness of mental application,

which are inconsistent with expression of moral feeling, for all these are of infelicitous augury; but not the full and serene development of habitual command in the look, and solemn thought in the brow, only these, in their unison with the signs of emotion, become softened and gradually confounded with a serenity and authority of nobler origin. But of the sweetness which that higher serenity (of happiness,) and the dignity which that higher authority (of Divine law, and not human reason,) can and must stamp on the features, it would be futile to speak here at length, for I suppose that both are acknowledged on all hands, and that there is not any beauty but theirs to which men pay long obedience: at all events, if not by sympathy discovered, it is not in words explicable with what divine lines and lights the exercise of godliness and charity will mould and gild the hardest and coldest countenance, neither to what darkness their departure will consign the loveliest. For there is not any virtue the exercise of which, even momentarily, will not impress a new fairness upon the features, neither on them only, but on the whole body, both the intelligence and the moral faculties have operation, for even all the movement and gestures, however slight, are different in their modes according to the mind that governs them, and on the gentleness and decision of just feeling there follows a grace of action, and through continuance of this a grace of form, which by no discipline may be taught or attained.

§ 6. What beauty is bestowed by them.

The third point to be considered with respect to the corporeal expression of mental character is, that there is a certain period of the soul culture when it begins to interfere with some of the characters of typical beauty belonging to the bodily frame, the stirring of the intellect wearing down the flesh, and the moral enthusiasm burning its way out to heaven, through the emaciation of the earthen vessel; and that there is, in this indication of subduing of the mortal by the immortal part, an ideal glory of perhaps a purer and higher range than that of the more perfect material form. We conceive, I think, more nobly of the weak presence of Paul, than of the fair and ruddy countenance of Daniel.

§ 7. How the soul culture interferes harmfully with the bodily ideal.

Now, be it observed that in our consideration of these three directions of mental influence, we have several times been com-

pelled to stop short of definite conclusions owing to the apparent inconsistency of certain excellences and beauties to which they tend, as, first, of different kinds of intellect with each other; and secondly, of the moral faculties with the intellectual, (and if we had separately examined the moral emotions, we should have found certain inconsistencies among them also,) and again of the soul culture generally with the bodily perfections. Such inconsistencies we should find in the perfections of no other animal. The strength or swiftness of the dog are not inconsistent with his sagacity, nor is bodily labor in the ant or bee destructive of their acuteness of instinct. And this peculiarity of relation among the perfections of man is no result of his fall or sinfulness, but an evidence of his greater nobility, and of the goodness of God towards him. For the individuals of each race of lower animals, being not intended to hold among each other those relations of charity which are the privilege of humanity, are not adapted to each other's assistance, admiration, or support, by differences of power and function. But the love of the human race is increased by their individual differences, and the unity of the creature, as before we saw of all unity, made perfect by each having something to bestow and to receive, bound to the rest by a thousand various necessities and various gratitudes, humility in each rejoicing to admire in his fellow that which he finds not in himself, and each being in some respect the complement of his race. Therefore, in investigating the signs of the ideal or perfect type of humanity, we must not presume on the singleness of that type, and yet, on the other hand, we must cautiously distinguish between differences conceivably existing in a perfect state, and differences resulting from immediate and present operation of the Adamite curse. Of which the former are differences that bind, and the latter that separate. For although we can suppose the ideal or perfect human heart, and the perfect human intelligence, equally adapted to receive every right sensation and pursue every order of truth, yet as it is appointed for some to be in authority and others in obedience, some in solitary functions and others in relative ones, some to receive and others to give, some to teach and some to discover;

§ 8. The inconsistency among the effects of the mental virtues on the form.

§ 9. Is a sign of God's kind purpose towards the race.

and as all these varieties of office are not only conceivable as existing in a perfect state of man, but seem almost to be implied by it, and at any rate cannot be done away with but by a total change of his constitution and dependencies, of which the imagination can take no hold; so there are habits and capacities of expression induced by these various offices, which admit of many separate ideals of equal perfection, according to the functions of the creatures, so that there is an ideal of authority, of judgment, of affection, of reason, and of faith; neither can any combination of these ideals be attained, not that the just judge is to be supposed incapable of affection, nor the king incapable of obedience, but as it is impossible that any essence short of the Divine should at the same instant be equally receptive of all emotions, those emotions which, by right and order, have the most usual victory, both leave the stamp of their habitual presence on the body, and render the individual more and more susceptible of them in proportion to the frequency of their prevalent recurrence; added to which causes of distinctive character are to be taken into account the differences of age and sex, which, though seemingly of more finite influence, cannot be banished from any human conception. David, ruddy and of a fair countenance, with the brook stone of deliverance in his hand, is not more ideal than David leaning on the old age of Barzillai, returning chastened to his kingly home. And they who are as the angels of God in heaven, yet cannot be conceived as so assimilated that their different experiences and affections upon earth shall then be forgotten and effectless: the child taken early to his place cannot be imagined to wear there such a body, nor to have such thoughts, as the glorified apostle who has finished his course and kept the faith on earth. And so whatever perfections and likeness of love we may attribute to either the tried or the crowned creatures, there is the difference of the stars in glory among them yet; differences of original gifts, though not of occupying till their Lord come, different dispensations of trial and of trust, of sorrow and support, both in their own inward, variable hearts, and in their positions of exposure or of peace, of the gourd shadow and the smiting sun, of calling at heat of day or eleventh hour, of the house unroofed by faith, and the clouds

§ 10. Consequent separation and difference of ideals.

opened by revelation: differences in warning, in mercies, in sicknesses, in signs, in time of calling to account; like only they all are by that which is not of them, but the gift of God's unchangeable mercy. "I will give unto this last even as unto thee."

Hence, then, be it observed, that what we must determinedly banish from the human form and countenance in our seeking of its ideal, is not everything which can be ultimately traced to the Adamite fall for its cause, but only the immediate operation and presence of the degrading power or sin. For there is not any part of our feeling of nature, nor can there be through eternity, which shall not be in some way influenced and affected by the fall, and that not in any way of degradation, for the renewing in the divinity of Christ is a nobler condition than ever that of Paradise, and yet throughout eternity it must imply and refer to the disobedience, and the corrupt state of sin and death, and the suffering of Christ himself, which can we conceive of any redeemed soul as for an instant forgetting, or as remembering without sorrow? Neither are the alternations of joy and such sorrow as by us is inconceivable, being only as it were a softness and silence in the pulse of an infinite felicity, inconsistent with the state even of the unfallen, for the angels who rejoice over repentance cannot but feel an uncomprehended pain as they try and try again in vain, whether they may not warm hard hearts with the brooding of their kind wings. So that we have not to banish from the ideal countenance the evidences of sorrow, nor of past suffering, nor even of past and conquered sin, but only the immediate operation of any evil, or the immediate coldness and hollowness of any good emotion. And hence in that contest before noted, between the body and the soul, we may often have to indicate the body as far conquered and outworn, and with signs of hard struggle and bitter pain upon it, and yet without ever diminishing the purity of its ideal; and because it is not in the power of any human imagination to reason out or conceive the countless modifications of experience, suffering, and separated feeling, which have modelled and written their indelible images in various order upon every human countenance, so

§ 11. The *effects* of the Adamite curse are to be distinguished from signs of its immediate activity.

§ 12. Which latter only are to be banished from ideal form.

no right ideal can be reached by any combination of feature nor by any moulding and melting of individual beauties together, and still less without model or example conceived; but there is a perfect ideal to be wrought out of *every* face around us that has on its forehead the writing and the seal of the angel ascending from the East,* by the earnest study and penetration of the written history thereupon, and the banishing of the blots and stains, wherein we still see in all that is human, the visible and instant operation of unconquered sin.

§ 13. Ideal form is only to be obtained by portraiture.

Now I see not how any of the steps of the argument by which we have arrived at this conclusion can be evaded, and yet it would be difficult to state anything more directly opposite to the usual teaching and practice of artists. It is usual to hear portraiture opposed to the pursuit of ideality, and yet we find that no face can be ideal which is not a portrait. Of this general principle, however, there are certain modifications which we must presently state; let us first, however, pursue it a little farther, and deduce its practical consequences.

These are, first, that the pursuit of idealism in humanity, as of idealism in lower nature, can be successful only when followed through the most constant, patient, and humble rendering of actual models, accompanied with that earnest mental as well as ocular study of each, which can interpret all that is written upon it, disentangle the hieroglyphics of its sacred history, rend the veil of the bodily temple, and rightly measure the relations of good and evil contending within it for mastery,† that everything done without such study must be shallow and contemptible, that generalization or combination of individual character will end less in the mending than the losing of it, and, except in certain instances of which we shall presently take note, is valueless and vapid, even if it escape being painful from its want of truth, which in these days it often in some measure does, for we indeed find faces about us with want enough of life or wholesome character in them to justify anything. And that habit of the old and great painters of introducing portrait into all their highest works, I look

§ 14. Instances among the greater of the ideal Masters.

* Rev. vii. 2. † Compare Part II. Sec. I. Chap. III. § 6.

to, not as error in them, but as the very source and root of their superiority in all things, for they were too great and too humble not to see in every face about them that which was above them, and which no fancies of theirs could match nor take place of, wherefore we find the custom of portraiture constant with them, both portraiture of study and for purposes of analysis, as with Leonardo; and actual, professed, serviceable, hardworking portraiture of the men of their time, as with Raffaelle, and Titian, and Tintoret; and portraiture of Love, as with Fra Bartolomeo of Savonarola, and Simon Memmi of Petrarch, and Giotto of Dante, and Gentile Bellini of a beloved imagination of Dandolo, and with Raffaelle constantly; and portraiture in real downright necessity of models, even in their noblest works, as was the practice of Ghirlandajo perpetually, and Masaccio and Raffaelle, and manifestly of the men of highest and purest ideal purpose, as again, Giotto, and in his characteristic monkish heads, Angelico, and John Bellini, (note especially the St. Christopher at the side of that mighty picture of St. Jerome, at Venice,) and so of all: which practice had indeed a perilous tendency for men of debased mind, who used models such as and where they ought not, as Lippi and the corrupted Raffaelle; and is found often at exceeding disadvantage among men who looked not at their models with intellectual or loving penetration, but took the outside of them, or perhaps took the evil and left the good, as Titian in that Academy study at Venice which is called a St. John, and all workers whatsoever that I know of, after Raffaelle's time, as Guido and the Caracci, and such others: but it is nevertheless the necessary and sterling basis of all ideal art, neither has any great man ever been able to do without it, nor dreamed of doing without it even to the close of his days.

§ 15. Evil results of opposite practice in modern times.

And therefore there is not any greater sign of the utter want of vitality and hopefulness in the schools of the present day than that unhappy prettiness and sameness under which they mask, or rather for which they barter, in their lentile thirst, all the birthright and power of nature, which prettiness, wrought out and spun fine in the study, out of empty heads, till it hardly betters the blocks on which dresses and hair are tried in barbers' windows and milliners' books, cannot but be revolting to any man who has his

eyes, even in a measure, open to the divinity of the immortal seal on the common features that he meets in the highways and hedges hourly and momentarily, outreaching all efforts of conception as all power of realization, were it Raffaelle's three times over, even when the glory of the wedding garment is not there.

So far, then, of the use of the model and the preciousness of it in all art, from the highest to the lowest. But the use of the model is not all. It must be used in a certain way, and on this choice of right or wrong way all our ends are at stake, for the art, which is of no power without the model, is of pernicious and evil power if the model be wrongly used. What the right use is, has been at least established, if not fully explained, in the argument by which we arrived at the general principle.

§ 16. The right use of the model.

The right ideal is to be reached, we have asserted, only by the banishment of the immediate signs of sin upon the countenance and body. How, therefore, are the signs of sin to be known and separated?

No intellectual operation is here of any avail. There is not any reasoning by which the evidences of depravity are to be traced in movements of muscle or forms of feature; there is not any knowledge, nor experience, nor diligence of comparison that can be of avail. Here, as throughout the operation of the theoretic faculty, the perception is altogether moral, an instinctive love and clinging to the lines of light. Nothing but love can read the letters, nothing but sympathy catch the sound, there is no pure passion that can be understood or painted except by pureness of heart; the foul or blunt feeling will see itself in everything, and set down blasphemies; it will see Beelzebub in the casting out of devils, it will find its god of flies in every alabaster box of precious ointment. The indignation of zeal towards God (nemesis) it will take for anger against man, faith and veneration it will miss of, as not comprehending, charity it will turn into lust, compassion into pride, every virtue it will go over against, like Shimei, casting dust. But the right Christian mind will in like manner find its own image wherever it exists, it will seek for what it loves, and draw it out of all dens and caves, and it will believe in its being, often when it cannot see it, and always turn

§ 17. Ideal form to be reached only by love.

away its eyes from beholding vanity; and so it will lie lovingly over all the faults and rough places of the human heart, as the snow from heaven does over the hard, and black, and broken mountain rocks, following their forms truly, and yet catching light for them to make them fair, and that must be a steep and unkindly crag indeed which it cannot cover.

Now of this spirit there will always be little enough in the world, and it cannot be given nor taught by men, and so it is of little use to insist on it farther, only I may note some practical points respecting the ideal treatment of human form, which may be of use in these thoughtless days. There is not the face, I have said, which the painter may not make ideal if he choose, but that subtile feeling which shall find out all of good that there is in any given countenance is not, except by concern for other things than art, to be acquired. But certain broad indications of evil there are which the bluntest feeling may perceive, and which the habit of distinguishing and casting out would both ennoble the schools of art, and lead in time to greater acuteness of perception with respect to the less explicable characters of soul beauty.

§ 18. Practical principles deducible.

Those signs of evil which are commonly most manifest on the human features are roughly divisible into these four kinds, the signs of pride, of sensuality, of fear, and of cruelty. Any one of which will destroy the ideal character of the countenance and body.

§ 19. Expressions chiefly destructive of ideal character. 1st. Pride.

Now of these, the first, pride, is perhaps the most destructive of all the four, seeing it is the undermost and original story of all sin; and it is base also from the necessary foolishness of it, because at its best, that is when grounded on a just estimation of our own elevation or superiority above certain others, it cannot but imply that our eyes look downward only, and have never been raised above our own measure, for there is not the man so lofty in his standing nor capacity but he must be humble in thinking of the cloud habitation and far sight of the angelic intelligences above him, and in perceiving what infinity there is of things he cannot know nor even reach unto, as it stands compared with that little body of things he can reach, and of which nevertheless he can altogether understand not one;

not to speak of that wicked and fond attributing of such excellency as he may have to himself, and thinking of it as his own getting, which is the real essence and criminality of pride, nor of those viler forms of it, founded on false estimation of things beneath us and irrational contemning of them: but taken at its best, it is still base to that degree that there is no grandeur of feature which it cannot destroy and make despicable, so that the first step towards the ennobling of any face is the ridding it of its vanity; to which aim there cannot be anything more contrary than that principle of portraiture which prevails with us in these days, whose end seems to be the expression of vanity throughout, in face and in all circumstances of accompaniment, tending constantly to insolence of attitude, and levity and haughtiness of expression, and worked out farther in mean accompaniments of worldly splendor and possession, together with hints or proclamations of what the person has done or supposes himself to have done, which, if known, it is gratuitous in the portrait to exhibit, and if unknown, it is insolent in the portrait to proclaim; whence has arisen such a school of portraiture as must make the people of the nineteenth century the shame of their descendants, and the butt of all time. To which practices are to be opposed both the glorious severity of Holbein, and the mighty and simple modesty of Raffaelle, Titian, Giorgione, and Tintoret, with whom armor does not constitute the warrior, neither silk the dame. And from what feeling the dignity of that portraiture arose is best traceable at Venice, where we find their victorious doges painted neither in the toil of battle nor the triumph of return, nor set forth with thrones and curtains of state, but kneeling always crownless, and returning thanks to God for his help, or as priests, interceding for the nation in its affliction. Which feeling and its results have been so well traced out by Rio,* that I need not speak of it farther.

§ 20. Portraiture ancient and modern.

That second destroyer of ideal form, the appearance of sensual character, though not less fatal in its operation on modern art, is more difficult to trace, owing to its peculiar subtlety. For it is not possible to say by what mi-

§ 21. Secondly, Sensuality.

* De la Poesie Chretienne. Forme de l'Art. Chap. VIII.

nute differences the right conception of the human form is separated from that which is luscious and foul: for the root of all is in the love and seeking of the painter, who, if of impure and feeble mind, will cover all that he touches with clay staining, as Bandinelli puts a foul scent of human flesh about his marble Christ, and as many whom I will not here name, among moderns; but if of mighty mind or pure, may pass through all places of foulness, and none will stay upon him, as Michael Angelo, or he will baptize all things and wash them with pure water, as our own Stothard. Now, so far as this power is dependent on the seeking of the artist, and is only to be seen in the work of good and spiritually-minded men, it is vain to attempt to teach or illustrate it, neither is it here the place to take note of the way in which it belongs to the representation of the mental image of things, instead of things themselves, of which we are to speak in treating of the imagination; but thus much may here be noted of broad, practical principle, that the purity of flesh painting depends in very considerable measure on the intensity and warmth of its color. For if it be opaque, and clay cold, and colorless, and devoid of all the radiance and value of flesh, the lines of its true beauty, being severe and firm, will become so hard in the loss of the glow and gradation by which nature illustrates them, that the painter will be compelled to sacrifice them for a luscious fulness and roundness, in order to give the conception of flesh; which, being done, destroys ideality of form as of color, and gives all over to lasciviousness of surface; showing also that the painter sought for this, and this only, since otherwise he had not taken a subject in which he knew himself compelled to surrender all sources of dignity. Whereas, right splendor of color both bears out a nobler severity of form, and is in itself purifying and cleansing, like fire, furnishing also to the painter an excuse for the choice of his subject, seeing that he may be supposed as not having painted it but in the admiration of its abstract glory of color and form, and with no unworthy seeking. But the mere power of perfect and glowing color will in some sort redeem even a debased tendency of mind itself, as eminently the case with Titian, who, though of little feeling, and often treat-

§ 22. How connected with impurity of color.

§ 23. And prevented by its splendor.

ing base subjects, or elevated subjects basely, as in the disgusting Magdalen of the Pitti palace, and that of the Barberigo at Venice, yet redeems all by his glory of hue, so that he cannot paint altogether coarsely; and with Giorgione, who had nobler and more serious intellect, the sense of nudity is utterly lost, and there is no need nor desire of concealment any more, but his naked figures move among the trees like fiery pillars, and lie on the grass like flakes of sunshine.* With the religious painters on the other hand, such nudity as they were compelled to treat is redeemed as much by severity of form and hardness of line as by color, so that generally their draped figures are preferable, as in the Francia of our own gallery. But these, with Michael Angelo and the Venetians, except Titian, form a great group, pure in sight and aim, between which and all other schools by which the nude has been treated, there is a gulf fixed, and all the rest, compared with them, seem striving how best to illustrate that of Spenser.

§ 24. Or by severity of drawing.

> "Of all God's works, which doe this worlde adorn,
> There is no one more faire, and excellent
> Than is man's body both for power and forme
> Whiles it is kept in sober government.
> But none than it more foul and indecent
> Distempered through misrule and passions bace."

Of these last, however, with whom ideality is lost, there are some worthier than others, according to that measure of color they reach, and power they possess, whence much may be forgiven to Rubens, (as to our own Etty,) less, as I think, to Correggio, who with less apparent and evident coarseness has more of inherent sensuality, wrought out with attractive and luscious refinement, and that alike in all subjects, as in the Madonna of the Incoronazione, over the high altar of San Giovanni at Parma, of which the head and upper portion of the figure, now preserved in the library, might serve as a model of attitude and expression to a ballet figurante :† and again in the

§ 25. Degrees of descent in this respect: Rubens, Correggio, and Guido.

* As in the noble Louvre picture.

† The Madonna turns her back to Christ, and bends her head over her shoulder to receive the crown, the arms being folded with studied grace over the bosom.

lascivious St. Catherine of the Giorno, and in the Charioted Diana, (both at Parma,) not to name any of his works of aim more definitely evil. Beneath which again will fall the works devoid alike of art and decency, as that Susannah of Guido, in our own gallery, and so we may descend to the absolute clay of the moderns, only noticing in all how much of what is evil and base in subject or tendency, is redeemed by what is pure and right in hue, so that I do not assert that the purpose and object of many of the grander painters of the nude, as Titian for instance, was always elevated, but only that we, who cannot paint the lamp of fire within the earthen pitcher, must take other weapons in our left hands. And it is to be noted, also, that in climates where the body can be more openly and frequently visited by sun and weather, the nude both comes to be regarded in a way more grand and pure, as necessarily awakening no ideas of base kind, (as pre-eminently with the Greeks,) and also from that exposure receives a firmness and sunny elasticity very different from the silky softness of the clothed nations of the north, where every model necessarily looks as if accidentally undressed; and hence from the very fear and doubt with which we approach the nude, it becomes expressive of evil, and for that daring frankness of the old men, which seldom missed of human grandeur, even when it failed of holy feeling, we have substituted a mean, carpeted, gauze-veiled, mincing sensuality of curls and crisping pins, out of which I believe nothing can come but moral enervation and mental paralysis.

§ 26. And modern art.

Respecting those two other vices of the human face, the expressions of fear and ferocity, there is less to be noted, as they only occasionally enter into the conception of character; only it is most necessary to make careful distinction between the conception of power, destructiveness, or majesty, in matter, influence, or agent, and the actual fear of any of these, for it is possible to conceive of terribleness, without being in a position obnoxious to the danger of it, and so without fear, and the feeling arising from this contemplation of dreadfulness, ourselves being in safety, as of a stormy sea from the shore, is properly termed awe, and is a most noble passion; whereas fear, mortal

§ 27. Thirdly, ferocity and fear. The latter how to be distinguished from awe.

and extreme, may be felt respecting things ignoble, as the falling from a window, and without any conception of terribleness or majesty in the thing, or the accident dreaded; and even when fear is felt respecting things sublime, as thunder, or storm of battle, yet the tendency of it is to destroy all power of contemplation of their majesty, and to freeze and shrink all the intellect into a shaking heap of clay, for absolute acute fear is of the same unworthiness and contempt from whatever source it arise, and degrades the mind and the outward bearing of the body alike, even though it be among hail of heaven and fire running along the ground. And so among the children of God, while there is always that fearful and bowed apprehension of his majesty, and that sacred dread of all offence to him, which is called the fear of God, yet of real and essential fear there is not any but clinging of confidence to him, as their Rock, Fortress, and Deliverer, and perfect love, and casting out of fear, so that it is not possible that while the mind is rightly bent on him, there should be dread of anything either earthly or supernatural, and the more dreadful seems the height of his majesty, the less fear they feel that dwell in the shadow of it, ("Of whom shall I be afraid?") so that they are as David was, devoted to his fear; whereas, on the other hand, those who, if they may help it, never conceive of God, but thrust away all thought and memory of him, and in his real terribleness and omnipresence fear him not nor know him, yet are of real, acute, piercing, and ignoble fear, haunted for evermore; fear inconceiving and desperate that calls to the rocks, and hides in the dust; and hence the peculiar baseness of the expression of terror, a baseness attributed to it in all times, and among all nations, as of a passion atheistical, brutal, and profane. So also, it is always joined with ferocity, which is of all passions the least human; for of sensual desires there is license to men, as necessity; and of vanity there is intellectual cause, so that when seen in a brute it is pleasant and a sign of good wit; and of fear there is at times necessity and excuse, as being allowed for prevention of harm; but of ferocity there is no excuse nor palliation, but it is pure essence of tiger and demon, and it casts

§ 28. Holy fear, how distinct from human terror.

§ 29. Ferocity is joined always with fear. Its unpardonableness.

on the human face the paleness alike of the horse of Death, and the ashes of hell.

Wherefore, of all subjects that can be admitted to sight, the expressions of fear and ferocity are the most foul and detestable, and so there is in them I know not what sympathetic attractiveness for minds cowardly and base, as the vulgar of most nations, and forasmuch as they are easily rendered by men who can render nothing else, they are often trusted in by the herd of painters incapable and profane, as in that monstrous abortion of the first room of the Louvre, called the Deluge, whose subject is pure, acute, mortal fear; and so generally the senseless horrors of the modern French schools, spawn of the guillotine: also there is not a greater test of grandeur or meanness of mind than the expressions it will seek for and develop in the features and forms of men in fierce strife, whether determination and devotion, and all the other attributes of that unselfishness which constitutes heroism, as in the warrior of Agasias; and distress not agitated nor unworthy, though mortal, as in the Dying Gladiator, or brutal ferocity and butchered agony, of which the lowest and least palliated examples are those battles of Salvator Rosa, which none but a man, base-born and thief-bred, could have dwelt upon for an instant without sickening, of which I will only name that example in the Pitti palace, wherein the chief figure in the foreground is a man with his arm cut off at the shoulder, run through the other hand into the breast with a lance.* And manifold instances of the same feeling are to be found in the repainting of the various representations of the Inferno, so common through Italy, more especially that of Orcagna's in the Campo Santo, wherein the few figures near the top that yet remain untouched are grand in their severe drawing and expressions of enduring despair, while those below, repainted by Solazzino, depend for their expressiveness upon torrents of blood; so in the Inferno of Santa Maria Novella, and of the Arena

§ 30. Such expressions how sought by painters powerless and impious.

* Compare Michelet, (Du Prêtre, de la Femme, de la Famille,) Chap. III. note. He uses language too violent to be quoted; but excuses Salvator by reference to the savage character of the Thirty Years' War. That this excuse has no validity may be proved by comparing the painter's treatment of other subjects. See Sec. II. Chap. III. § 19, note.

chapel, not to speak of the horrible images of the Passion, by which vulgar Romanism has always striven to excite the languid sympathies of its untaught flocks. Of which foulness let us reason no farther, the very image and memory of them being pollution, only noticing this, that there has always been a morbid tendency in Romanism towards the contemplation of bodily pain, owing to the attribution of saving power to it, which, like every other moral error, has been of fatal effect in art, leaving not altogether without the stain and blame of it, even the highest of the pure Romanist painters; as Fra Angelico, for instance, who, in his Passion subjects, always insists weakly on the bodily torture, and is unsparing of blood; and Giotto, though his treatment is usually grander, as in that Crucifixion over the door of the Convent of St. Marks, where the blood is hardly actual, but issues from the feet in a typical and conventional form, and becomes a crimson cord which is twined strangely beneath about a skull; only that which these holy men did to enhance, even though in their means mistaken, the impression and power of the sufferings of Christ, or of his saints, is always in a measure noble, and to be distinguished with all reverence from the abominations of the irreligious painters following, as of Camillo Procaccini, in one of his martyrdoms in the Gallery of the Brera, at Milan, and other such, whose names may be well spared to the reader.

These, then, are the four passions whose presence in any degree on the human face is degradation. But of all passion it is to be generally observed, that it becomes ignoble either when entertained respecting unworthy objects, and therefore shallow or unjustifiable, or when of impious violence, and so destructive of human dignity. Thus grief is noble or the reverse, according to the dignity and worthiness of the object lamented, and the grandeur of the mind enduring it. The sorrow of mortified vanity or avarice is simply disgusting, even that of bereaved affection may be base if selfish and unrestrained. All grief that convulses the features is ignoble, because it is commonly shallow and certainly temporary, as in children, though in the shock and shiver of a strong man's features under sudden and violent grief there may be something of sublime. The grief of Guercino's Hagar, in the Brera gallery

§ 31. Of passion generally.

at Milan, is partly despicable, partly disgusting, partly ridiculous; it is not the grief of the injured Egyptian, driven forth into the desert with the destiny of a nation in her heart, but of a servant of all work, turned away for stealing tea and sugar.

§ 22. It is never to be for itself exhibited—at least on the face.

Common painters forget that passion is not absolutely and in itself great or violent, but only in proportion to the weakness of the mind it has to deal with; and that in exaggerating its outward signs, they are not exalting the passion, but evaporating the hero.* They think too much of passions as always the same in their nature, forgetting that the love of Achilles is different from the love of Paris, and of Alcestis from that of Laodamia. The use and value of passion is not as a subject in contemplation in itself, but as it breaks up the fountains of the great deep of the human mind, or displays its mightiness and ribbed majesty, as mountains are seen in their stability best among the coil of clouds; whence, in fine, I think it is to be held that all passion which attains overwhelming power, so that it is not as resisting, but as conquered, that the creature is contemplated, is unfit for high art, and destructive of the ideal character of the countenance: and in this respect, I cannot but hold Raffaelle to have erred in his endeavor to express passion of such acuteness in the human face; as in the fragment of the Massacre of the Innocents in our own gallery, (wherein, repainted though it be, I suppose the purpose of the master is yet to be understood,) for if such subjects are to be represented at all, their entire expression may be given without degrading the face, as we shall presently see done with unspeakable power by Tintoret,† and I think that all subjects of the kind, all human misery, slaughter, famine, plague, peril, and crime, are better in the main avoided, as of unprofitable and hardening influence, unless so far as out of the suffering, hinted rather than expressed, we may raise into nobler relief the eternal enduring of fortitude and affection, of mercy and self-devotion, or when, as by the threshing-floor of Ornan, and by the cave of Lazarus, the angel of the Lord is to be

* "The fire, that mounts the liquor, till it run o'er
In seeming to augment it, wastes it."
HENRY VIII.

† Sect. II. Chap. III. § 22.

seen in the chastisement, and his love to be manifested to the despair of men.

Thus, then, we have in some sort enumerated those evil signs which are most necessary to be shunned in the seeking of ideal beauty,* though it is not the knowledge of them, but the dread and hatred of them, which will effectually aid the painter; as on the other hand it is not by mere admission of the loveliness of good and holy expression that its subtile characters are to be traced. Raffaelle himself, questioned on this subject, made doubtful answer; he probably could not trace through what early teaching, or by what dies of emotion the image had been sealed upon his heart. Our own Bacon, who well saw the impossibility of reaching it by the combination of many separate beauties, yet explains not the nature of that "kind of felicity" to which he attributes success. I suppose those who have conceived and wrought the loveliest things, have done so by no theorizing, but in simple labor of love, and could not, if put to a bar of rationalism, defend all points of what they had done, but painted it in their own delight, and to the delight of all besides, only always with that respect of conscience and "fear of swerving from that which is right, which maketh diligent observers of circumstances the loose regard whereof is the nurse of vulgar folly, no less than Solomon's attention thereunto was of natural furtherances the most effectual to make him eminent above others, for he gave good heed, and pierced everything to the very ground." †

§ 33. Recapitulation.

With which good heed, and watching of the instants when men feel warmly and rightly, as the Indians do for the diamond in their washing of sand, and that with the desire and hope of finding true good in men, and not with the ready vanity that sets itself to fiction instantly, and carries its potter's wheel about with it always, (off which there will come only clay vessels

* Let it be observed that it is always of beauty, not of human character in its lower and criminal modifications, that we have been speaking. That variety of character, therefore, which we have affirmed to be necessary, is the variety of Giotto and Angelico, not of Hogarth. Works concerned with the exhibition of general character, are to be spoken of in the consideration of Ideas of Relation.

† Hooker, Book V. Chap. I. § 2.

of regular shape after all,) instead of the pure mirror that can show the seraph standing by the human body—standing as signal to the heavenly land :* with this heed and this charity, there are none of us that may not bring down that lamp upon his path of which Spenser sang :—

" That beauty is not, as fond men misdeem
An outward show of things, that only seem ;
But that fair lamp, from whose celestial ray
That light proceeds, which kindleth lover's fire,
Shall never be extinguished nor decay.
But when the vital spirits do expire,
Unto her native planet shall retire,
For it is heavenly born and cannot die,
Being a parcel of the purest sky."

* " Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And by the holy rood,
A man all light, a seraph man
By every corse there stood.
This seraph band, each waved his hand,
It was a heavenly sight ;
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light."

ANCIENT MARINER.

CHAPTER XV.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS RESPECTING THE THEORETIC FACULTY.

§ 1. There are no sources of the emotion of beauty more than those found in things visible.

Of the sources of beauty open to us in the visible world, we have now obtained a view which, though most feeble in its grasp and scanty in its detail, is yet general in its range. Of no other sources than these visible can we, by any effort in our present condition of existence, conceive. For what revelations have been made to humanity inspired, or caught up to heaven of things to the heavenly region belonging, have been either by unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter, or else by their very nature incommunicable, except in types and shadows; and ineffable by words belonging to earth, for of things different from the visible, words appropriated to the visible can convey no image. How different from earthly gold that clear pavement of the city might have seemed to the eyes of St. John, we of unreceived sight cannot know; neither of that strange jasper and sardine can we conceive the likeness which he assumed that sat on the throne above the crystal sea; neither what seeming that was of slaying that the Root of David bore in the midst of the elders; neither what change it was upon the form of the fourth of them that walked in the furnace of Dura, that even the wrath of idolatry knew for the likeness of the Son of God. The knowing that is here permitted to us is either of things outward only, as in those it is whose eyes faith never opened, or else of that dark part that her glass shows feebly, of things supernatural, that gleaming of the Divine form among the mortal crowd, which all may catch if they will climb the sycamore and wait; nor how much of God's abiding at the house may be granted to those that so seek, and how much more may be opened to them in the breaking of bread, cannot be said; but of that only we can reason which is in a measure revealed to all, of that which is by constancy and purity

of affection to be found in the things and the beings around us upon earth. Now among all those things whose beauty we have hitherto examined, there has been a measure of imperfection. Either inferiority of kind, as the beauty of the lower animals, or resulting from degradation, as in man himself; and although in considering the beauty of human form, we arrived at some conception of restoration, yet we found that even the restoration must be in some respect imperfect, as incapable of embracing all qualities, moral and intellectual, at once, neither to be freed from all signs of former evil done or suffered. Consummate beauty, therefore, is not to be found on earth, though often such intense measure of it as shall drown all capacity of receiving; neither is it to be respecting humanity legitimately conceived. But by certain operations of the imagination upon ideas of beauty received from things around us, it is possible to conceive respecting superhuman creatures (of that which is more than creature, no creature ever conceived) a beauty in some sort greater than we see. Of this beauty, however, it is impossible to determine anything until we have traced the imaginative operations to which it owes its being, of which operations this much may be prematurely said, that they are not creative, that no new ideas are elicited by them, and that their whole function is only a certain dealing with, concentrating or mode of regarding the impressions received from external things, that therefore, in the beauty to which they will conduct us, there will be found no new element, but only a peculiar combination or phase of those elements that we now know, and that therefore we may at present draw all the conclusions with respect to the rank of the theoretic faculty, which the knowledge of its subject matter can warrant.

§ 2. What imperfection exists in visible things. How in a sort by imagination removable.

§ 3. Which however affects not our present conclusions.

We have seen that this subject matter is referable to four general heads. It is either the record of conscience, printed in things external, or it is a symbolizing of Divine attributes in matter, or it is the felicity of living things, or the perfect fulfilment of their duties and functions. In all cases it is something Divine, either the approving voice of God, the glorious symbol of him,

§ 4. The four sources from which the pleasure of beauty is derived are all divine.

the evidence of his kind presence, or the obedience to his will by him induced and supported.

All these subjects of contemplation are such as we may suppose will remain sources of pleasure to the perfected spirit throughout eternity. Divine in their nature, they are addressed to the immortal part of men.

§ 5. What objections may be made to this conclusion.

There remain, however, two points to be noticed before I can hope that this conclusion will be frankly accepted by the reader. If it be the moral part of us to which beauty addresses itself, how does it happen, it will be asked, that it is ever found in the works of impious men, and how is it possible for such to desire or conceive it?

On the other hand, how does it happen that men in high state of moral culture are often insensible to the influence of material beauty, and insist feebly upon it as an instrument of soul culture.

These two objections I shall endeavor briefly to answer, not that they can be satisfactorily treated without that detailed examination of the whole body of great works of art, on which I purpose to enter in the following volume. For the right determination of these two questions is indeed the whole end and aim of my labor, (and if it could be here accomplished, I should bestow no effort farther,) namely, the proving that no supreme power of art can be attained by impious men; and that the neglect of art, as an interpreter of divine things, has been of evil consequence to the Christian world.

At present, however, I would only meet such objections as must immediately arise in the reader's mind.

§ 6. Typical beauty may be æsthetically pursued. Instances.

And first, it will be remembered that I have, throughout the examination of typical beauty, asserted its instinctive power, the moral meaning of it being only discoverable by faithful thought. Now this instinctive sense of it varies in intensity among men, being given, like the hearing ear of music, to some more than to others: and if those to whom it is given in large measure be unfortunately men of impious or unreflecting spirit, it is very possible that the perceptions of beauty should be by them cultivated on principles merely æsthetic, and so lose their hallowing power; for though the good seed in them is altogether divine,

yet, there being no blessing in the springing thereof, it brings forth wild grapes in the end. And yet these wild grapes are well discernible, like the deadly gourds of Gilgal. There is in all works of such men a taint and stain, and jarring discord, blacker and louder exactly in proportion to the moral deficiency, of which the best proof and measure is to be found in their treatment of the human form, (since in landscape it is nearly impossible to introduce definite expression of evil,) of which the highest beauty has been attained only once, and then by no system taught painter, but by a most holy Dominican monk of Fiesole; and beneath him all stoop lower and lower in proportion to their inferior sanctity, though with more or less attainment of that which is noble, according to their intellectual power and earnestness, as Raffaelle in his St. Cecilia, (a mere study of a passionate, dark-eyed, large formed Italian model,) and even Perugino, in that there is about his noblest faces a shortcoming, indefinable; an absence of the full out-pouring of the sacred spirit that there is in Angelico; traceable, I doubt not, to some deficiencies and avaricious flaws of his heart, whose consequences in his conduct were such as to give Vasari hope that his lies might stick to him (for the contradiction of which in the main, if there be not contradiction enough in every line that the hand of Perugino drew, compare Rio, de la Poësie Chrétienne, and note also what Rio has singularly missed observing, that Perugino, in his portrait of himself in the Florence gallery, has put a scroll into the hand, with the words "Timete Deum," thus surely indicating that which he considered his duty and message:) and so all other even of the sacred painters, not to speak of the lower body of men in whom, on the one hand, there is marked sensuality and impurity in all that they seek of beauty, as in Correggio and Guido, or, on the other, a want in measure of the sense of beauty itself, as in Rubens and Titian, showing itself in the adoption of coarse types of feature and form; sometimes also (of which I could find instances in modern times,) in a want of evidence of delight in what they do; so that, after they have rendered some passage of exceeding beauty, they will suffer some discordant point to interfere with it, and it will not hurt them, as if they had no pleasure in that which was best, but had done it in in-

§ 7. How interrupted by false feeling.

spiration that was not profitable to them, as deaf men might touch an instrument with a feeling in their heart, which yet returns not outwardly upon them, and so know not when they play false: and sometimes by total want of choice, for there is a choice of love in all rightly tempered men, not that ignorant and insolent choice which rejects half nature as empty of the right, but that pure choice that fetches the right out of everything; and where this is wanting, we may see men walking up and down in dry places, finding no rest, ever and anon doing something noble, and yet not following it up, but dwelling the next instant on something impure or profitless with the same intensity and yet impatience, so that they are ever wondered at and never sympathized with, and while they dazzle all, they lead none; and then, beneath these again, we find others on whose works there are definite signs of evil mind, ill-repressed, and then inability to avoid, and at last perpetual seeking for and feeding upon horror and ugliness, and filthiness of sin, as eminently in Salvator and Caravaggio, and the lower Dutch schools, only in these last less painfully as they lose the villanous in the brutal, and the horror of crime in its idiocy.

§8. Greatness and truth are sometimes by the Deity sustained and spoken in and through evil men.

But secondly, it is to be noted that it is neither by us uncertainable what moments of pure feeling or aspiration may occur to men of minds apparently cold and lost, nor by us to be pronounced through what instruments, and in what strangely occurrent voices, God may choose to communicate good to men. It seems to me that much of what is great, and to all men beneficial, has been wrought by those who neither intended nor knew the good they did, and that many mighty harmonies have been discoursed by instruments that had been dumb or discordant, but that God knew their stops. The Spirit of Prophecy consisted with the avarice of Balaam, and the disobedience of Saul. Could we spare from its page that parable, which he said, who saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open, though we know that the sword of his punishment was then sharp in its sheath beneath him in the plains of Moab? or shall we not lament with David over the shield cast away on the Gilboa mountains, of him to whom God gave *another heart* that day when he turned his back to go from Sam-

uel? It is not our part to look hardly, nor to look always, to the character or the deeds of men, but to accept from all of them, and to hold fast that which we can prove good, and feel to be ordained for us. We know that whatever good there is in them is itself divine, and wherever we see the virtue of ardent labor and self-surrendering to a single purpose, wherever we find constant reference made to the written scripture of natural beauty, this at least we know is great and good, this we know is not granted by the counsel of God, without purpose, nor maintained without result: Their interpretation we may accept, into their labor we may enter, but they themselves must look to it, if what they do has no intent of good, nor any reference to the Giver of all gifts. Selfish in their industry, unchastened in their wills, ungrateful for the Spirit that is upon them, they may yet be helmed by that Spirit whithersoever the Governor listeth; involuntary instruments they may become of others' good; unwillingly they may bless Israel, doubtingly discomfit Amalek, but shortcoming there will be of their glory, and sure, of their punishment.

I believe I shall be able, incidentally, in succeeding investigations, to prove this shortcoming, and to examine the sources of it, not absolutely indeed, (seeing that all reasoning on the characters of men must be treacherous, our knowledge on this head being as corrupt as it is scanty, while even in living with them it is impossible to trace the working, or estimate the errors of great and self-secreted minds,) but at least enough to establish the general principle upon such grounds of fact as may satisfy those who demand the practical proof (often in a measure impossible) of things which can hardly be doubted in their rational consequence. At present, it would be useless to enter on an examination for which we have no materials; and I proceed, therefore, to notice that other and opposite error of Christian men in thinking that there is little use or value in the operation of the theoretic faculty, not that I at present either feel myself capable, or that this is the place for the discussion of that vast question of the operation of taste (as it is called) on the minds of men, and the national value of its teaching, but I wish shortly to reply to that objection which might be urged to the real

§ 9. The second objection arising from the coldness of Christian men to external beauty.

moral dignity of the faculty, that many Christian men seem to be in themselves without it, and even to discountenance it in others.

It has been said by Schiller, in his letters on æsthetic culture, that the sense of beauty never farthered the performance of a single duty.

Although this gross and inconceivable falsity will hardly be accepted by any one in so many terms, seeing that there are few so utterly lost but that they receive, and know that they receive, at certain moments, strength of some kind, or rebuke from the appealings of outward things; and that it is not possible for a Christian man to walk across so much as a rood of the natural earth, with mind unagitated and rightly poised, without receiving strength and hope from some stone, flower, leaf, or sound, nor without a sense of a dew falling upon him out of the sky; though, I say, this falsity is not wholly and in terms admitted, yet it seems to be partly and practically so in much of the doing and teaching even of holy men, who in the recommending of the love of God to us, refer but seldom to those things in which it is most abundantly and immediately shown; though they insist much on his giving of bread, and raiment, and health, (which he gives to all inferior creatures,) they require us not to thank him for that glory of his works which he has permitted us alone to perceive: they tell us often to meditate in the closet, but they send us not, like Isaac, into the fields at even, they dwell on the duty of self-denial, but they exhibit not the duty of delight. Now there are reasons for this, manifold, in the toil and warfare of an earnest mind, which, in its efforts at the raising of men from utter loss and misery, has often but little time or disposition to take heed of anything more than the bare life, and of those so occupied it is not for us to judge, but I think, that, of the weaknesses, distresses, vanities, schisms, and sins, which often even in the holiest men, diminish their usefulness, and mar their happiness, there would be fewer if, in their struggle with nature fallen, they sought for more aid from nature undestroyed. It seems to me that the real sources of bluntness in the feelings towards the

§ 10. Reasons for this coldness in the anxieties of the world. These anxieties overwrought and criminal.

splendor of the grass and glory of the flower, are less to be found in ardor of occupation, in seriousness of compassion, or heavenliness of desire, than in the turning of the eye at intervals of rest too selfishly within; the want of power to shake off the anxieties of actual and near interest, and to leave results in God's hands; the scorn of all that does not seem immediately apt for our purposes, or open to our understanding, and perhaps something of pride, which desires rather to investigate than to feel. I believe that the root of almost every schism and heresy from which the Christian church has ever suffered, has been the effort of men to earn, rather than to receive, their salvation; and that the reason that preaching is so commonly ineffectual is, that it calls on men oftener to work for God, than to behold God working for them. If, for every rebuke that we utter of men's vices, we put forth a claim upon their hearts; if for every assertion of God's demands from them, we could substitute a display of his kindness to them; if side by side with every warning of death, we could exhibit proofs and promises of immortality; if, in fine, instead of assuming the being of an awful Deity, which men, though they cannot and dare not deny, are always unwilling, sometimes unable, to conceive, we were to show them a near, visible, inevitable, but all beneficent Deity, whose presence makes the earth itself a heaven, I think there would be fewer deaf children sitting in the market-place. At all events, whatever may be the inability in this present life to mingle the full enjoyment of the Divine works with the full discharge of every practical duty, and confessedly in many cases this must be, let us not attribute the inconsistency to any indignity of the faculty of contemplation, but to the sin and the suffering of the fallen state, and the change of order from the keeping of the garden to the tilling of the ground. We cannot say how far it is right or agreeable with God's will, while men are perishing round about us, while grief, and pain, and wrath, and impiety, and death, and all the powers of the air, are working wildly and evermore, and the cry of blood going up to heaven, that any of us should take hand from the plough; but this we know, that there will come a time when the service of

§ 11. Evil consequences of such coldness.

§ 12. Theoria the service of Heaven.

God shall be the beholding of him; and though in these stormy seas, where we are now driven up and down, his Spirit is dimly seen on the face of the waters, and we are left to cast anchors out of the stern, and wish for the day, that day will come, when, with the evangelists on the crystal and stable sea, all the creatures of God shall be full of eyes within, and there shall be "no more curse, but his servants shall serve him, and shall see his face."

SECTION II.

OF THE IMAGINATIVE FACULTY.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE THREE FORMS OF IMAGINATION.

§ 1. A partial examination only of the imagination is to be attempted.

WE have hitherto been exclusively occupied with those sources of pleasure which exist in the external creation, and which in any faithful copy of it must to a certain extent exist also.

These sources of beauty, however, are not presented by any very great work of art in a form of pure transcript. They invariably receive the reflection of the mind under whose shadow they have passed, and are modified or colored by its image.

This modification is the Work of Imagination.

As, in the course of our succeeding investigation, we shall be called upon constantly to compare sources of beauty existing in nature with the images of them presented by the human mind, it is very necessary for us shortly to review the conditions and limits of the imaginative faculty, and to ascertain by what tests we may distinguish its sane, healthy, and profitable operation, from that which is erratic, diseased, and dangerous.

It is neither desirable nor possible here to examine or illustrate in full the essence of this mighty faculty. Such an examination would require a review of the whole field of literature, and would alone demand a volume. Our present task is not to explain or exhibit full portraiture of this function of the mind in all its relations, but only to obtain some certain tests by which we may determine whether it be very imagination or no, and unmask all impersonations of it, and this chiefly with respect to art, for in literature the faculty takes a thousand forms, according to the matter it has to treat, and becomes like the princess of the Arabian tale, sword, eagle, or fire, according to the war it

wages, sometimes piercing, sometimes soaring, sometimes illumining, retaining no image of itself, except its supernatural power, so that I shall content myself with tracing that particular form of it, and unveiling those imitations of it only, which are to be found, or feared, in painting, referring to other creations of mind only for illustration.

§ 2. The works of the metaphysicians how nugatory with respect to this faculty.

Unfortunately, the works of metaphysicians will afford us in this most interesting inquiry no aid whatsoever. They who are constantly endeavoring to fathom and explain the essence of the faculties of mind, are sure in the end to lose sight of all that cannot be explained, (though it may be defined and felt,) and because, as I shall presently show, the essence of the imaginative faculty is utterly mysterious and inexplicable, and to be recognized in its results only, or in the negative results of its absence, the metaphysicians, as far as I am acquainted with their works, miss it altogether, and never reach higher than a definition of fancy by a false name.

What I understand by fancy will presently appear, not that I contend for nomenclature, but only for distinction between two mental faculties, by whatever name they be called, one the source of all that is great in the poetic arts; the other merely decorative and entertaining, but which are often confounded together, and which have so much in common as to render strict definition of either difficult.

§ 3. The definition of D. Stewart, how inadequate.

Dugald Stewart's meagre definition may serve us for a starting point. "Imagination," he says, "includes conception or simple apprehension, which enables us to form a notion of those former objects of perception or of knowledge, out of which we are to make a selection; abstraction, which separates the selected materials from the qualities and circumstances which are connected with them in nature; and judgment or taste, which selects the materials and directs their combination. To these powers we may add that particular habit of association to which I formerly gave the name of fancy, as it is this which presents to our choice all the different materials which are subservient to the efforts of imagination, and which may therefore be considered as forming the ground-work of poetical genius."

(By fancy in this passage, we find on referring to the chapter treating of it, that nothing more is meant than the rapid occurrence of ideas of sense to the mind.)

Now, in this definition, the very point and purpose of all the inquiry is missed. We are told that judgment or taste "directs the combination." In order that anything may be directed, an end must be previously determined: What is the faculty that determines this end? and of what frame and make, how boned and fleshed, how conceived or seen, is the end itself? Bare judgment, or taste, cannot approve of what has no existence; and yet by Dugald Stewart's definition we are left to their catering among a host of conceptions, to produce a combination which, as they work for, they must see and approve before it exists. This power of prophecy is the very essence of the whole matter, and it is just that inexplicable part which the metaphysician misses.

As might be expected from his misunderstanding of the faculty, he has given an instance entirely nugatory.* It would be difficult to find in Milton a passage in which less power of imagination was shown, than the description of Eden, if, as I suppose, this be the passage meant, at the beginning of the fourth book, in which I can find three expressions only in which this power is shown, the "*burnished* with golden rind, hung amiable" of the Hesperian fruit, the "*lays forth* her purple grape" of the vine and

§ 4. This instance nugatory.

* He continues thus, "To illustrate these observations, let us consider the steps by which Milton must have proceeded, in creating his imaginary garden of Eden. When he first proposed to himself that subject of description, it is reasonable to suppose that a variety of the most striking scenes which he had seen, crowded into his mind. The association of ideas suggested them and the power of conception placed each of them before him with all its beauties and imperfections. In every natural scene, if we destine it for any particular purpose, there are defects and redundancies, which art may sometimes, but cannot always correct. But the power of imagination is unlimited. She can create and annihilate, and dispose at pleasure her woods, her rocks, and her rivers. Milton, accordingly, would not copy his Eden from any one scene, but would select from each the features which were most eminently beautiful. The power of abstraction enabled him to make the separation, and taste directed him in the selection."

the "*fringed* bank with myrtle crowned," of the lake, and these are not what Stewart meant, but only that accumulation of bowers, groves, lawns, and hillocks, which is not imagination at all, but composition, and that of the commonest kind. Hence, if we take any passage in which there is real imagination, we shall find Stewart's hypothesis not only inefficient and obscure, but utterly inapplicable.

§ 5. Various instances.

Take one or two at random.

> "On the other side,
> Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
> Unterrified, and like a comet burned
> That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
> In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
> Shakes pestilence and war."

(Note that the word incensed is to be taken in its literal and material sense, set on fire.) What taste or judgment was it that directed this combination? or is there nothing more than taste or judgment here?

> "Ten paces huge
> He back recoiled; the tenth on bended knee
> His massy spear upstaid, as if on earth
> Winds under ground, or waters forcing way
> *Sidelong had pushed a mountain from his seat,*
> *Half-sunk with all his pines.*

> "Together both ere the high lawns appeared
> *Under the opening eyelids* of the morn,
> We drove a field, and both together heard
> What time the gray-fly winds her *sultry* horn.

> "Missing thee, I walk unseen
> On the dry smooth shaven green,
> To behold the wandering moon
> Riding near her highest noon,
> *Like one that had been led astray,*
> Through the heavens' wide pathless way,
> And oft *as if her head she bowed*
> Stooping through a fleecy cloud."

It is evident that Stewart's explanation utterly fails in all these instances, for there is in them no "combination" whatsoever, but a particular mode of regarding the qualities or appear-

ances of a single thing, illustrated and conveyed to us by the image of another; and the act of imagination, observe, is not the selection of this image, but the mode of regarding the object.

But the metaphysician's definition fails yet more utterly, when we look at the imagination neither as regarding, nor combining, but as penetrating.

> "My gracious Silence, Hail:
> Wouldst thou have laughed, had I come coffin'd home
> That weep'st to see me triumph. Ah! my dear,
> Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear,
> And mothers that lack sons."

How did Shakspeare *know* that Virgilia could not speak?

This knowledge, this intuitive and penetrative perception, is still one of the forms, the highest, of imagination, but there is no combination of images here.

We find, then, that the imagination has three totally distinct functions. It combines, and by combination creates new forms; but the secret principle of this combination has not been shown by the analysts. Again, it treats or regards both the simple images and its own combinations in peculiar ways; and, thirdly, it penetrates, analyzes, and reaches truths by no other faculty discoverable. These its three functions, I shall endeavor to illustrate, but not in this order: the most logical mode of treatment would be to follow the order in which commonly the mind works; that is, penetrating first, combining next, and treating or regarding, finally; but this arrangement would be inconvenient, because the acts of penetration and of regard are so closely connected, and so like in their relations to other mental acts, that I wish to examine them consecutively, and the rather, because they have to do with higher subject matter than the mere act of combination, whose distinctive nature, that property which makes it imagination and not composition, it will I think be best to explain at setting out, as we easily may, in subjects familiar and material. I shall therefore examine the imaginative faculty in these three forms; first, as combining or associative; secondly, as analytic or penetrative; thirdly, as regardant or contemplative.

§ 6. The three operations of the Imagination. Penetrative, associative, contemplative.

CHAPTER II.

OF IMAGINATION ASSOCIATIVE.

In order to render our inquiry as easy as possible, we shall consider the dealing of the associative imagination with the simplest possible matter, that is,—with conceptions of material things. First, therefore, we must define the nature of these conceptions themselves.

§ 1. Of simple conception.

After beholding and examining any material object, our knowledge respecting it exists in two different forms. Some facts exist in the brain in a verbal form, as known, but not conceived, as, for instance, that it was heavy or light, that it was eight inches and a quarter long, etc., of which length we cannot have accurate conception, but only such a conception as might attach to a length of seven inches or nine; and which fact we may recollect without any conception of the object at all. Other facts respecting it exist in the brain in a visible form, not always visible, but voluntarily visible, as its being white, or having such and such a complicated shape, as the form of a rose-bud, for instance, which it would be difficult to express verbally, neither is it retained by the brain in a verbal form, but a visible one, that is, when we wish for knowledge of its form for immediate use, we summon up a vision or image of the thing; we do not remember it in words, as we remember the fact that it took so many days to blow, or that it was gathered at such and such a time.

The knowledge of things retained in this visible form is called conception by the metaphysicians, which term I shall retain; it is inaccurately called imagination by Taylor, in the passage quoted by Wordsworth in the preface to his poems, not but that the term imagination is etymologically and rightly expressive of it, but we want that term for a higher faculty.

There are many questions respecting this faculty of conception of very great interest, such as the exact amount of aid that

verbal knowledge renders so visible, (as, for instance, the verbal knowledge that a flower has five, or seven, or ten petals, or that a muscle is inserted at such and such a point of the bone, aids the conception of the flower or the limb ;) and again, what amount of aid the visible knowledge renders to the verbal, as for instance, whether any one, being asked a question about some animal or thing, which instantly and from verbal knowledge he cannot answer, may have such power of summoning up the image of the animal or thing as to ascertain the fact, by actual beholding, (which I do not assert, but can conceive to be possible ;) and again, what is that indefinite and subtile character of the conception itself in most men, which admits not of being by themselves traced or realized, and yet is a sure test of likeness in any representation of the thing ; like an intaglio, with a front light on it, whose lines cannot be seen, and yet they will fit one definite form only, and that accurately ; these and many other questions it is irrelevant at present to determine,* since to forward our present purpose, it will be well to suppose the conception, aided by verbal knowledge, to be absolutely perfect, and we will suppose a man to retain such clear image of a large number of the material things he has seen, as to be able to set down any of them on paper with perfect fidelity and absolute memory † of their most minute features.

§ 2. How connected with verbal knowledge.

In thus setting them down on paper, he works, I suppose, exactly as he would work from nature, only copying the remembered image in his mind, instead of the real thing. He is, therefore, still nothing more than a copyist. There is no exercise of imagination in this whatsoever.

But over these images, vivid and distinct as nature herself, he has a command which over nature he has not. He can summon any that he chooses, and if, therefore, any group of them which he received from nature be not altogether to his mind, he is at liberty to remove some of the component images, add others foreign, and re-arrange the whole.

§ 3. How used in composition.

* Compare Chapter IV. of this Section.

† On the distinction rightly made by the metaphysicians between conception absolute and conception accompanied by reference to past time, (or memory,) it is of no necessity here to insist.

Let us suppose, for instance, that he has perfect knowledge of the forms of the Aiguilles Verte and Argentière, and of the great glacier between them at the upper extremity of the valley of Chamonix. The forms of the mountains please him, but the presence of the glacier suits not his purpose. He removes the glacier, sets the mountains farther apart, and introduces between them part of the valley of the Rhone.

This is composition, and is what Dugald Stewart mistook for imagination, in the kingdom of which noble faculty it has no part nor lot.

The essential characters of composition, properly so called, are these. The mind which desires the new feature summons up before it those images which it supposes to be of the kind wanted,

§ 4. Characteristics of composition.

of these it takes the one which it supposes to be fittest, and tries it: if it will not answer, it tries another, until it has obtained such an association as pleases it.

In this operation, if it be of little sensibility, it regards only the absolute beauty or value of the images brought before it; and takes that or those which it thinks fairest or most interesting, without any regard to their sympathy with those for whose company they are destined. Of this kind is all vulgar composition; the "Mulino" of Claude, described in the preface to the first part, being a characteristic example.

If the mind be of higher feeling, it will look to the sympathy or contrast of the features, to their likeness or dissimilarity; it will take, as it thinks best, features resembling or discordant, and if when it has put them together, it be not satisfied, it will repeat the process on the features themselves, cutting away one part and putting in another, so working more and more delicately down to the lowest details, until by dint of experiment, of repeated trials and shiftings, and constant reference to principles, (as that two lines must not mimic one another, that one mass must not be equal to another,) etc., it has morticed together a satisfactory result.

This process will be more and more rapid and effective, in proportion to the artist's powers of conception and association, these in their turn depending on his knowledge and experience. The distinctness of his powers of conception will give value, point, and truth to every fragment that he draws from memory.

His powers of association, and his knowledge of nature will pour out before him in greater or less number and appositeness the images from which to choose. His experience guides him to quick discernment in the combination, when made, of the parts that are offensive and require change.

§ 5. What powers are implied by it. The first of the three functions of fancy.

The most elevated power of mind of all these, is that of association, by which images apposite or resemblant, or of whatever kind wanted, are called up quickly and in multitudes. When this power is very brilliant, it is called fancy, not that this is the only meaning of the word fancy, but it is the meaning of it in relation to that function of the imagination which we are here considering; for fancy has three functions; one subordinate to each of the three functions of the imagination.

Great differences of power are manifested among artists in this respect, some having hosts of distinct images always at their command, and rapidly discerning resemblance or contrast; others having few images, and obscure, at their disposal, nor readily governing those they have.

Where the powers of fancy are very brilliant, the picture becomes highly interesting; if her images are systematically and rightly combined, and truthfully rendered, it will become even impressive and instructive; if wittily and curiously combined, it will be captivating and entertaining.

But all this time the imagination has not once shown itself. All this (except the gift of fancy) may be taught, all this is easily comprehended and analyzed; but imagination is neither to be taught, nor by any efforts to be attained, nor by any acuteness of discernment dissected or analyzed.

§ 6. Imagination not yet manifested.

We have seen that in composition the mind can only take cognizance of likeness or dissimilarity, or of abstract beauty among the ideas it brings together. But neither likeness nor dissimilarity secures harmony. We saw in the chapter on unity that likeness destroyed harmony or unity of membership, and that difference did not necessarily secure it, but only that particular imperfection in each of the harmonizing parts which can only be supplied by its fellow part. If, therefore, the combination made is to be harmonious, the artist must induce in each of

its component parts (suppose two only, for simplicity's sake,) such imperfection as that the other shall put it right. If one of them be perfect by itself, the other will be an excrescence. Both must be faulty when separate, and each corrected by the presence of the other. If he can accomplish this, the result will be beautiful; it will be a whole, an organized body with dependent members;—he is an inventor. If not, let his separate features be as beautiful, as apposite, or as resemblant as they may, they form no whole. They are two members glued together. He is only a carpenter and joiner.

§ 7. Imagination is the correlative conception of imperfect component parts.

Now, the conceivable imperfections of any single feature are infinite. It is impossible, therefore, to fix upon a form of imperfection in the one, and try with this all the forms of imperfection of the other until one fits; but the two imperfections must be correlatively and simultaneously conceived.

This is imagination, properly so called, imagination associative, the grandest mechanical power that the human intelligence possesses, and one which will appear more and more marvellous the longer we consider it. By its operation, two ideas are chosen out of an infinite mass, (for it evidently matters not whether the imperfections be conceived out of the infinite number conceivable, or selected out of a number recollected,) two ideas which are separately wrong, which together shall be right, and of whose unity, therefore, the idea must be formed at the instant they are seized, as it is only in that unity that either are good, and therefore only the *conception of that unity can prompt the preference.* Now, what is that prophetic action of mind, which, out of an infinite mass of things that cannot be tried together, seizes, at the same instant two that are fit for each other, together right; yet each disagreeable alone.

§ 8. Material analogy with imagination.

This operation of mind, so far as I can see, is absolutely inexplicable, but there is something like it in chemistry.

"The action of sulphuric acid on metallic zinc affords an instance of what was once called disposing affinity. Zinc decomposes pure water at common temperatures with extreme slowness; but as soon as sulphuric acid is added, decomposition of the water takes place rapidly, though the acid merely unites

with oxide of zinc. The former explanation was, that the affinity of the acid for oxide of zinc disposed the metal to unite with oxygen, and thus enabled it to decompose water; that is, the oxide of zinc was supposed to produce an effect previous to its existence. The obscurity of this explanation arises from regarding changes as consecutive, which are in reality simultaneous. There is no succession in the process, the oxide of zinc is not formed previously to its combination with the acid, but at the same instant. There is, as it were, but one chemical change, which consists in the combination at one and the same moment of zinc with oxygen, and of oxide of zinc with the acid; and this change occurs because these two affinities, acting together, overcome the attraction of oxygen and hydrogen for one another." *

Now, if the imaginative artist will permit us, with all deference, to represent his combining intelligence under the figure of sulphuric acid; and if we suppose the fragment of zinc to be embarrassed among infinitely numerous fragments of diverse metals, and the oxygen dispersed and mingled among gases countless and indistinguishable, we shall have an excellent type in material things of the action of the imagination on the immaterial. Both actions are, I think, inexplicable, for however simultaneous the chemical changes may be, yet the causing power is the affinity of the acid for what has no existence. It is neither to be explained how that affinity operates on atoms uncombined, nor how the artist's desire for an unconceived whole prompts him to the selection of necessary divisions.

Now, this operation would be wonderful enough, if it were concerned with two ideas only. But a powerfully imaginative mind seizes and combines at the same instant, not only two, but all the important ideas of its poem or picture, and while it works with any one of them, it is at the same instant working with and modifying all in their relations to it, never losing sight of their bearings on each other; as the motion of a snake's body goes through all parts at once, and its volition acts at the same instant in coils that go contrary ways.

§ 9. The grasp and dignity of imagination.

* Elements of Chemistry, by the late Edward Turner, M.D. Part II., Sec. IV.

This faculty is indeed something that looks as if man were made after the image of God. It is inconceivable, admirable, altogether divine; and yet wonderful as it may seem, it is palpably evident that no less an operation is necessary for the production of any great work, for, by the definition of unity of membership, (the essential characteristic of greatness,) not only certain couples or groups of parts, but *all* the parts of a noble work must be separately imperfect; each must imply, and ask for all the rest, and the glory of every one of them must consist in its relation to the rest, neither while so much as one is wanting can any be right. And it is evidently impossible to conceive in each separate feature, a certain want or wrongness which can only be corrected by the other features of the picture, (not by one or two merely, but by all,) unless together with the want, we conceive also of what is wanted, that is of all the rest of the work or picture. Hence Fuseli:—

"Second thoughts are admissible in painting and poetry only as dressers of the first conception; no great idea was ever formed in fragments."

"He alone can conceive and compose who sees the whole at once before him."

§ 10. Its limits.

There is, however, a limit to the power of all human imagination. When the relations to be observed are absolutely necessary, and highly complicated, the mind cannot grasp them, and the result is a total deprivation of all power of imagination associative in such matter. For this reason, no human mind has ever conceived a new animal. For as it is evident that in an animal, every part implies all the rest; that is, the form of the eye involves the form of the brow and nose, these the form of the forehead and lip, these of the head and chin, and so on, so that it is physically impossible to conceive of any one of these members, unless we conceive the relation it bears to the whole animal; and as this relation is necessary, certain, and complicated, allowing of no license or inaccuracy, the intellect utterly fails under the load, and is reduced to mere composition, putting the bird's wing on men's shoulders, or half the human body to half the horse's, in doing which there is no action of imagination, but only of fancy; though in the treatment and contemplation of the compound form there

may be much imagination, as we shall presently see. (Chap. III. § 30.)

§ 11. How manifested in treatment of uncertain relations. Its deficiency illustrated.

The matter, therefore, in which associative imagination can be shown is that which admits of great license and variety of arrangements, and in which a certain amount of relation only is required; as especially in the elements of landscape painting, in which best it may be illustrated.

When an unimaginative painter is about to draw a tree, (and we will suppose him, for better illustration of the point in question, to have good feeling and correct knowledge of the nature of trees,) he probably lays on his paper such a general form as he knows to be characteristic of the tree to be drawn, and such as he believes will fall in agreeably with the other masses of his picture, which we will suppose partly prepared. When this form is set down, he assuredly finds it has done something he did not intend it to do. It has mimicked some prominent line, or overpowered some necessary mass. He begins pruning and changing, and after several experiments, succeeds in obtaining a form which does no material mischief to any other. To this form he proceeds to attach a trunk, and having probably a received notion or rule (for the unimaginative painter never works without a principle) that tree trunks ought to lean first one way and then the other as they go up, and ought not to stand under the middle of the tree, he sketches a serpentine form of requisite propriety; when it has gone up far enough, that is till it begins to look disagreeably long, he will begin to ramify it, and if there be another tree in the picture with two large branches, he knows that this, by all laws of composition, ought to have three or four, or some different number; one because he knows that if three or four branches start from the same point they will look formal, therefore he makes them start from points one above another, and because equal distances are improper, therefore they shall start at unequal distances. When they are fairly started, he knows they must undulate or go backwards and forwards, which accordingly he makes them do at random; and because he knows that all forms ought to be contrasted, therefore he makes one bend down while the other three go up. The three that go up he knows must not go up

without interfering with each other, and so he makes two of them cross. He thinks it also proper that there should be variety of character in them, so he makes the one that bends down graceful and flexible, and of the two that cross, he splinters one and makes a stump of it. He repeats the process among the more complicated minor boughs, until coming to the smallest, he thinks farther care unnecessary, but draws them freely, and by chance. Having to put on the foliage, he will make it flow properly in the direction of the tree's growth, he will make all the extremities graceful, but will be grievously plagued by finding them come all alike, and at last will be obliged to spoil a number of them altogether, in order to obtain opposition. They will not, however, be united in this their spoliation, but will remain uncomfortably separate and individually ill-tempered. He consoles himself by the reflection that it is unnatural for all of them to be equally perfect.

§ 12. Laws of art, the safeguard of the unimaginative,

Now I suppose that through the whole of this process he has been able to refer to his definite memory or conception of nature for every one of the fragments he has successively added, that the details, color, fractures, insertions, etc., of his boughs, are all either actual recollections or based on secure knowledge of the tree, (and herein I allow far more than is commonly the case with unimaginative painters.) But as far as the process of combination is concerned, it is evident that from beginning to end his laws have been his safety, and his plague has been his liberty. He has been compelled to work at random, or under the guidance of feeling only, whenever there was anything left to his own decision. He has never been decided in anything except in what he *must* or *must not* do. He has walked as a drunken man on a broad road, his guides are the hedges; and between these limits, the broader the way, the worse he gets on.

§ 13. Are by the imaginative painter despised. Tests of imagination.

The advance of the imaginative artist is precisely the reverse of this. He has no laws. He defies all restraint, and cuts down all hedges. There is nothing within the limits of natural possibility that he dares not do, or that he allows the necessity of doing. The laws of nature he knows, these are to him no restraint. They are his own nature. All other laws or limits he sets at utter defiance,

his journey is over an untrodden and pathless plain. But he sees his end over the waste from the first, and goes straight at it, never losing sight of it, nor throwing away a step. Nothing can stop him, nothing turn him aside; falcons and lynxes are of slow and uncertain sight compared with his. He saw his tree, trunk, boughs, foliage and all, from the first moment; not only the tree but the sky behind it; not only that tree or sky, but all the other great features of his picture: by what intense power of instantaneous selection and amalgamation cannot be explained, but by this it may be proved and tested, that if we examine the tree of the unimaginative painter, we shall find that on removing any part or parts of it, the rest will indeed suffer, as being deprived of the proper development of a tree, and as involving a blank space that wants occupation; but the portions left are not made discordant or disagreeable. They are absolutely and in themselves as valuable as they can be, every stem is a perfect stem, and every twig a graceful twig, or at least as perfect and as graceful as they were before the removal of the rest. But if we try the same experiment on the imaginative painter's work, and break off the merest stem or twig of it, it all goes to pieces like a Prince Rupert's drop. There is not so much as a seed of it but it lies on the tree's life, like the grain upon the tongue of Chaucer's sainted child. Take it away, and the boughs will sing to us no longer. All is dead and cold.

§ 14. The monotony of unimaginative treatment.

This then is the first sign of the presence of real imagination as opposed to composition. But here is another not less important.

We have seen that as each part is selected and fitted by the unimaginative painter, he renders it, in itself, as beautiful as he is able. If it be ugly, it remains so, he is incapable of correcting it by the addition of another ugliness, and therefore he chooses all his features as fair as they may be (at least if his object be beauty.) But a small proportion only of the ideas he has at his disposal will reach his standard of absolute beauty. The others will be of no use to him, and among those which he permits himself to use, there will be so marked a family likeness, that he will be more and more cramped, as his picture advances, for want of material, and tormented by multiplying resemblances, unless disguised by some artifice of light and shade or other

forced difference, and with all the differences he can imagine, his tree will yet show a sameness and sickening repetition in all its parts, and all his trees will be like one another, except so far as one leans east and another west, one is broadest at the top and another at the bottom, while through all this insipid repetition, the means by which he forces contrast, dark boughs opposed to light, rugged to smooth, etc., will be painfully evident, to the utter destruction of all dignity and repose. The imaginative work is necessarily the absolute opposite of all this. As all its parts are imperfect, and as there is an unlimited supply of imperfection, (for the ways in which things may be wrong are infinite,) the imagination is never at a loss, nor ever likely to repeat itself; nothing comes amiss to it, but whatever rude matter it receives, it instantly so arranges that it comes right; all things fall into their place and appear in that place perfect, useful, and evidently not to be spared, so that of its combinations there is endless variety, and every intractable and seemingly unavailable fragment that we give to it, is instantly turned to some brilliant use, and made the nucleus of a new group of glory; however poor or common the gift, it will be thankful for it, treasure it up, and pay in gold, and it has that life in it and fire, that wherever it passes, among the dead bones and dust of things, behold a shaking, and the bones come together, bone to his bone.

§ 15. Imagination never repeats itself.

And now we find what noble sympathy and unity there is between the imaginative and theoretic faculties. Both agree in this, that they reject nothing, and are thankful for all; but the theoretic faculty takes out of everything that which is beautiful, while the imaginative faculty takes hold of the very imperfections which the theoretic rejects, and by means of these angles and roughnesses, it joints and bolts the separate stones into a mighty temple, wherein the theoretic faculty in its turn, does deepest homage. Thus sympathetic in their desires, harmoniously diverse in their operation, each working for the other with what the other needs not, all things external to man are by one or other turned to good.

§ 16. Relation of the imaginative faculty to the theoretic.

Now we have hitherto, for the sake of clearness, opposed the total absence of imagination to the perfect presence of it, in order to make the difference between composition and imagina-

tion thoroughly understood. But if we are to give examples of either the want or the presence of the power, it is necessary to note the circumstances by which both are modified. In the first place, few artists of any standing are totally devoid of this faculty, some small measure of it most of them possess, though of all the forms of intellect, this, and its sister, penetrative imagination, are the rarest and most precious; but few painters have reached eminence without some leaven of it, whether it can be increased by practice I doubt. On the other hand, fewer still are possessed of it in very high degree, and even with the men of most gigantic power in this respect, of whom, I think, Tintoret stands far the head, there are evident limits to its exercise, and portions to be found in their works that have not been included in the original grasp of them, but have been suggested and incorporated during their progress, or added in decoration; and with the great mass of painters there are frequent flaws and failures in the conception, so that, when they intend to produce a perfect work they throw their thought into different experimental forms, and decorate it and discipline it long before realizing it, so that there is a certain amount of mere composition in the most imaginative works; and a grain or two of imagination commonly in the most artificial. And again, whatever portions of a picture are taken honestly and without alteration from nature, have, so far as they go, the look of imagination, because all that nature does is imaginative, that is, perfect as a whole, and made up of imperfect features; so that the painter of the meanest imaginative power may yet do grand things, if he will keep to strict portraiture, and it would be well if all artists were to endeavor to do so, for if they have imagination, it will force its way in spite of them, and show itself in their every stroke, and if not, they will not get it by leaving nature, but only sink into nothingness.

§ 17. Modification of its manifestation.

Keeping these points in view, it is interesting to observe the different degrees and relations of the imagination, as accompanied with more or less feeling or desire of harmony, vigor of conception, or constancy of reference to truth. Of men of name, perhaps Claude is the best instance of a want of imagination, nearly total, borne out by painful but untaught study of nature, and much feeling for

§ 18. Instances of absence of imagination. — Claude, Gaspar Poussin.

abstract beauty of form, with none whatever for harmony of expression. In Gaspar Poussin, we have the same want of imagination disguised by more masculine qualities of mind, and grander reachings after sympathy. Thus in the sacrifice of Isaac in our own gallery, the spirit of the composition is solemn and unbroken; it would have been a grand picture if the forms of the mass of foliage on the right, and of the clouds in the centre, had not been hoplessly unimaginative. The stormy wind of the picture of Dido and Eneas blows loudly through its leaves, but the total want of invention in the cloud forms bears it down beyond redemption. The foreground tree of the La Riccia (compare Part II. Sec. VI. Chap. I., § 6.) is another characteristic instance of absolute nullity of imagination.

§ 19. Its presence.—Salvator, Nicolo Poussin, Titian, Tintoret.

In Salvator, the imagination is vigorous, the composition dextrous and clever, as in the St. Jerome of the Brera Gallery, the Diogenes of the Pitti, and the pictures of the Guadagni palace. All are rendered valueless by coarseness of feeling and habitual non-reference to nature.

All the landscape of Nicolo Poussin is imaginative, but the development of the power in Tintoret and Titian is so unapproachably intense that the mind unwillingly rests elsewhere. The four landscapes which occur to me as the most magnificently characteristic are, first, the Flight into Egypt, of the Scuola di San Rocco (Tintoret;) secondly, the Titian of the Camuccini collection at Rome, with the figures by John Bellini; thirdly, Titian's St. Jerome, in the Brera Gallery at Milan; and fourthly, the St. Pietro Martire, which I name last, in spite of its importance, because there is something unmeaning and unworthy of Titian about the undulation of the trunks, and the upper part of it is destroyed by the intrusion of some dramatic clouds of that species which I have enough described in our former examination of the central cloud region, § 13.

I do not mean to set these four works above the rest of the landscape of these masters; I name them only because the landscape is in them prominent and characteristic. It would be well to compare with them the other backgrounds of Tintoret in the Scuola, especially that of the Temptation and the Agony in

the Garden, and the landscape of the two large pictures in the church of La Madonna dell' Orto.

§ 20. And Turner.

But for immediate and close illustration, it is perhaps best to refer to a work more accessible, the Cephalus and Procris of Turner, in Liber Studiorum.

I know of no landscape more purely or magnificently imaginative or bearing more distinct evidence of the relative and simultaneous conception of the parts. Let the reader first cover with his hand the two trunks that rise against the sky on the right, and ask himself how any termination of the central mass so *ugly* as the straight trunk which he will then painfully see, could have been conceived or admitted without simultaneous conception of the trunks he has taken away on the right? Let him again conceal the whole central mass, and leave these two only, and again ask himself whether anything so ugly as that bare trunk in the shape of a Y, could have been admitted without reference to the central mass? Then let him remove from this trunk its two arms, and try the effect; let him again remove the single trunk on the extreme right; then let him try the third trunk without the excrescence at the bottom of it; finally, let him conceal the fourth trunk from the right, with the slender boughs at the top; he will find in each case that he has destroyed a feature on which everything else depends, and if proof be required of the vital power of still smaller features, let him remove the sunbeam that comes through beneath the faint mass of trees on the hill in the distance.*

It is useless to enter into farther particulars; the reader may be left to his own close examination of this and of the other works of Turner, in which he will always find the associative imagination developed in the most profuse and marvellous modes, especially in the drawing of foliage and skies, in both of which the presence or absence of the associative power may best be tested in all artists. I have, however, confined my present illustrations chiefly to foliage, because other operations of the imagination besides the associative, interfere extensively in the treatment of sky.

* This ray of light, however, has an imaginative power of another kind presently to be spoken of. Compare Chap. IV. § 18.

There remains but one question to be determined relating to this faculty, what operation, namely, supposing it possessed in high degree, it has or ought to have in the artist's treatment of natural scenery.

§ 21. The due function of Associative imagination with respect to nature.

I have just said that nature is always imaginative, but it does not follow that her imagination is always of high subject, or that the imagination of all the parts is of a like and sympathetic kind; the boughs of every bramble bush are imaginatively arranged, so are those of every oak and cedar; but it does not follow that there is imaginative sympathy between bramble and cedar. There are few natural scenes whose harmonies are not conceivably improvable either by banishment of some discordant point, or by addition of some sympathetic one; it constantly happens that there is a profuseness too great to be comprehended, or an inequality in the pitch, meaning, and intensity of different parts. The imagination will banish all that is extraneous, it will seize out of the many threads of different feeling which nature has suffered to become entangled, one only, and where that seems thin and likely to break, it will spin it stouter, and in doing this, it never knots, but weaves in the new thread, so that all its work looks as pure and true as nature itself, and cannot be guessed from it but by its exceeding simplicity, (*known* from it, it cannot be,) so that herein we find another test of the imaginative work, that it looks always as if it had been gathered straight from nature, whereas the unimaginative shows its joints and knots, and is visibly composition.

§ 22. The sign of imaginative work is its appearance of absolute truth.

And here then we arrive at an important conclusion (though one somewhat contrary to the positions commonly held on the subject,) namely, that if anything looks unnatural, there can be no imagination in it (at least not associative.) We frequently hear works that have no truth in them, justified or elevated on the score of being imaginative. Let it be understood once for all, that imagination never designs to touch anything but truth, and though it does not follow that where there is the appearance of truth, there has been imaginative operation, of this we may be assured, that where there is appearance of falsehood, the imagination has had no hand.*

* Compare Chap. III. § 30.

For instance, the landscape above mentioned of Titian's St. Jerome may, for aught I know, be a pure transcript of a rocky slope covered with chestnuts among his native mountains. It has all the look of a sketch from nature; if it be not, the imagination developed in it is of the highest order; if it be, the imagination has only acted in the suggestion of the dark sky, of the shape of the flakes of solemn cloud, and of the gleam of russet light along the distant ground.*

Again, it is impossible to tell whether the two nearest trunks of the Æsâcus and Hesperie of the Liber Studiorum, especially the large one on the right with the ivy, have been invented, or taken straight from nature, they have all the look of accurate portraiture. I can hardly imagine anything so perfect to have been obtained except from the real thing; but we know that the imagination must have begun to operate somewhere, we cannot tell where, since the multitudinous harmonies of the rest of the picture could hardly in any real scene have continued so inviolately sweet.

The final tests, therefore, of the work of associative imagination are its intense simplicity, its perfect harmony, and its absolute truth. It may be a harmony, majestic, or humble, abrupt, or prolonged, but it is always a governed and perfect whole, evidencing in all its relations the weight, prevalence, and universal dominion of an awful, inexplicable Power; a chastising, animating, and disposing Mind.

* It is said at Venice that Titian took the trees of the St. Pietro Martiere out of his garden opposite Murano. I think this unlikely; there is something about the lower trunks that has a taint of composition: the thought of the whole, however, is thoroughly fine. The backgrounds of the frescoes at Padua are also very characteristic, and the well-known wood-cut of St. Francis receiving the stigmata, one of the mightiest of existing landscape thoughts; and yet it is pure portraiture of pine and Spanish chestnut.

CHAPTER III.

OF IMAGINATION PENETRATIVE.

THUS far we have been defining that combining operation of the imagination, which appears to be in a sort mechanical, yet takes place in the same inexplicable modes, whatever be the order of conception submitted to it, though I chose to illustrate it by its dealings with mere matter before taking cognizance of any nobler subjects of imagery. We must now examine the dealing of the imagination with its separate conceptions, and endeavor to understand not only its principles of selection, but its modes of apprehension with respect to what it selects.

§ 1. Imagination penetrative is concerned not with the combining but apprehending of things.

When Milton's Satan first "rears from off the pool, his mighty stature," the image of Leviathan before suggested not being yet abandoned, the effect on the fire-wave is described as of the upheaved monster on the ocean stream.

§ 2. Milton's and Dante's description of flame.

> "On each hand the flames,
> Driven backwards, slope their pointing spires, and rolled
> In billows, leave in the midst a horrid vale."

And then follows a fiercely restless piece of volcanic imagery:

> "As when the force
> Of subterranean wind transports a hill
> Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
> Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible
> And fuell'd entrails thence conceiving fire,
> Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
> And leave a singed bottom, all involved
> With stench and smoke; such resting found the sole
> Of unblest feet."

Yet I think all this is too far detailed, and deals too much with externals; we feel rather the form of the fire-waves than their fury, we walk upon them too securely, and the fuel, subli-

mation, smoke, and singeing, seem to me images only of partial combustion; they vary and extend the conception, but they lower the thermometer. Look back, if you will, and add to the description the glimmering of the livid flames; the sulphurous hail and red lightning; yet altogether, however they overwhelm us with horror, fail of making us thoroughly, unendurably hot. The intense essence of flame has not been given. Now hear Dante:—

> "Feriami 'l Sole in su l'omero destro
> Che già raggiando tutto l'Occidente
> *Mutava in bianco aspetto di ellestro.*
> *Ed io* facea *con l'ombra più rovente*
> *Parer la fiamma.*"

That is a slight touch; he has not gone to Ætna nor Pelorus for fuel; but we shall not soon recover from it—he has taken our breath away and leaves us gasping. No smoke nor cinders there. Pure, white, hurtling, formless flame; very fire crystal, we cannot make spires nor waves of it, nor divide it, nor walk on it, there is no question about singeing soles of feet. It is lambent, annihilation.

§ 3. The imagination seizes always by the innermost point.

Such is always the mode in which the highest imaginative faculty seizes its materials. It never stops at crusts or ashes, or outward images of any kind, it ploughs them all aside, and plunges into the very central fiery heart, nothing else will content its spirituality, whatever semblances and various outward shows and phases its subject may possess, go for nothing, it gets within all fence, cuts down to the root, and drinks the very vital sap of that it deals with: once there it is at liberty to throw up what new shoots it will, so always that the true juice and sap be in them, and to prune and twist them at its pleasure, and bring them to fairer fruit than grew on the old tree; but all this pruning and twisting is work that it likes not, and often does ill; its function and gift are the getting at the root, its nature and dignity depend on its holding things always by the heart. Take its hand from off the beating of that, and it will prophesy no longer; it looks not in the eyes, it judges not by the voice, it describes not by outward features, all that it affirms, judges, or describes, it affirms from within.

It may seem to the reader that I am incorrect in calling this penetrating, possession-taking faculty, imagination. Be it so, the name is of little consequence; the faculty itself, called by what name we will, I insist upon as the highest intellectual power of man. There is no reasoning in it, it works not by algebra, nor by integral calculus, it is a piercing, Pholas-like mind's tongue that works and tastes into the very rock heart, no matter what be the subject submitted to it, substance or spirit, all is alike, divided asunder, joint and marrow, whatever utmost truth, life, principle, it has, laid bare, and that which has no truth, life, nor principle, dissipated into its original smoke at a touch. The whispers at men's ears it lifts into visible angels. Vials that have lain sealed in the deep sea a thousand years it unseals, and brings out of them Genii.

§ 4. It acts intuitively and without reasoning.

Every great conception of poet or painter is held and treated by this faculty. Every character that is so much as touched by men like Æschylus, Homer, Dante, or Shakspeare, is by them held by the heart; and every circumstance or sentence of their being, speaking, or seeming, is seized by process from within, and is referred to that inner secret spring of which the hold is never lost for an instant; so that every sentence, as it has been thought out from the heart, opens for us a way down to the heart, leads us to the centre, and then leaves us to gather what more we may; it is the open sesame of a huge, obscure, endless cave, with inexhaustible treasure of pure gold scattered in it: the wandering about and gathering the pieces may be left to any of us, all can accomplish that; but the first opening of that invisible door in the rock is of the imagination only.

Hence there is in every word set down by the imaginative mind an awful under-current of meaning, and evidence and shadow upon it of the deep places out of which it has come. It is often obscure, often half told, for he who wrote it, in his clear seeing of the things beneath, may have been impatient of detailed interpretation, but if we choose to dwell upon it and trace it, it will lead us always securely back to that metropolis of the soul's dominion from which we may follow out all the ways and tracks to its farthest coasts.

§ 5. Signs of it in language.

I think the "Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante" of

Francesca di Rimini, and the "He has no children" of Macduff are as fine instances as can be given, but the sign and mark of it are visible on every line of the four great men above instanced.

The imaginative writer, on the other hand, as he has never pierced to the heart, so he can never touch it: if he has to paint a passion, he remembers the external signs of it, he collects expressions of it from other writers, he searches for similes, he composes, exaggerates, heaps term on term, figure on figure, till we groan beneath the cold, disjointed heap; but it is all faggot and no fire, the life breath is not in it, his passion has the form of the Leviathan, but it never makes the deep boil, he fastens us all at anchor in the scaly rind of it, our sympathies remain as idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean.

§ 6. Absence of imagination, how shown.

And that virtue of originality that men so strain after, is not newness, as they vainly think, (there is nothing new,) it is only genuineness; it all depends on this single glorious faculty of getting to the spring of things and working out from that; it is the coolness, and clearness, and deliciousness of the water fresh from the fountain head, opposed to the thick, hot, unrefreshing drainage from other men's meadows.

This freshness, however, is not to be taken for an infallible sign of imagination, inasmuch as it results also from a vivid operation of fancy, whose parallel function to this division of the imaginative faculty it is here necessary to distinguish.

§ 7. Distinction between imagination and fancy.

I believe it will be found that the entirely unimaginative mind *sees* nothing of the object it has to dwell upon or describe, and is therefore utterly unable, as it is blind itself, to set anything before the eyes of the reader.*

The fancy sees the outside, and is able to give a portrait of the outside, clear, brilliant, and full of detail.†

The imagination sees the heart and inner nature, and makes them felt, but is often obscure, mysterious, and interrupted, in its giving of outer detail.

Take an instance. A writer with neither imagination nor

* Compare Arist. Rhet. III. 11.

† For the distinction between fancy and simple conception; see Chap. IV. § 3.

fancy, describing a fair lip, does not see it, but thinks about it, and about what is said of it, and calls it well-turned, or rosy, or delicate, or lovely, or afflicts us with some other quenching and chilling epithet. Now hear fancy speak,—

> "Her lips were red, and one was thin,
> Compared with that was next her chin,
> Some bee had stung it newly." *

The real, red, bright being of the lip is there in a moment. But it is all outside; no expression yet, no mind. Let us go a step farther with Warner, of fair Rosamond struck by Eleanor.

> "With that she dashed her on the lips
> So dyed double red;
> Hard was the heart that gave the blow,
> Soft were those lips that bled."

The tenderness of mind begins to mingle with the outside color, the imagination is seen in its awakening. Next Shelley,—

> "Lamp of life, thy lips are burning
> Through the veil that seems to hide them,
> As the radiant lines of morning
> Through thin clouds, ere they divide them."

There dawns the entire soul in that morning; yet we may stop if we choose at the image still external, at the crimson clouds. The imagination is contemplative rather than penetrative. Last, hear Hamlet,—

"Here hung those lips that I have kissed, I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar?"

* I take this and the next instance from Leigh Hunt's admirable piece of criticism, "Imagination and Fancy," which ought to be read with care, and to which, though somewhat loosely arranged, I may refer for all the filling up and illustration that the subject requires. With respect to what has just been said respecting want of imagination, compare his criticism of Addison's Cato, p. 28. I cannot, however, confirm his judgment, nor admit his selection of instances, among painters: he has looked to their manner only and habitual choice of subject, without feeling their power; and has given work to the coarseness, mindlessness, and eclecticism of Guido and the Carracci, which in its poetical demand of tenderness might have foiled Pinturicchio; of dignity, Leonardo; and of color, Giorgione.

There is the essence of lip, and the full power of the imagination.

Again, compare Milton's flowers in Lycidas with Perdita's. In Milton it happens, I think, generally, and in the case before us most certainly, that the imagination is mixed and broken with fancy, and so the strength of the imagery is part of iron and part of clay.

"Bring the rathe primrose, that forsaken dies	(Imagination)
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,	(Nugatory)
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,—	(Fancy)
The glowing violet,	(Imagination)
The musk rose, and the well-attired woodbine,	(Fancy, vulgar)
With cowslips wan, that hang the pensive head,	(Imagination)
And every flower that sad embroidery wears."	(Mixed)

Then hear Perdita :—

> "O, Proserpina,
> For the flowers now, that frighted thou let'st fall
> From Dis's wagon. Daffodils
> That come before the swallow dares, and take
> The winds of March with beauty. Violets, dim,
> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
> Or Cytherea's breath ; pale primroses
> That die unmarried, ere they can behold
> Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
> Most incident to maids."

Observe how the imagination in these last lines goes into the very inmost soul of every flower, after having touched them all at first with that heavenly timidness, the shadow of Proserpine's ; and gilded them with celestial gathering, and never stops on their spots, or their bodily shape, while Milton sticks in the stains upon them, and puts us off with that unhappy freak of jet in the very flower that without this bit of paper-staining would have been the most precious to us of all. "There is pansies, that's for thoughts."

So I believe it will be found throughout the operation of the fancy, that it has to do with the outsides of things, and is content therewith : of this there can be no doubt in such passages as that description of Mab, so often given as an illustration of it, and many other instances will be found in Leigh Hunt's work already referred to.

§ 8. Fancy how involved with imagination.

Only some embarrassment is caused by passages in which fancy is seizing the outward signs of emotion, understanding them as such, and yet, in pursuance of her proper function, taking for her share, and for that which she chooses to dwell upon, the outside sign rather than the emotion. Note in Macbeth that brilliant instance.

> "Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky
> And fan our people cold."

The outward shiver and coldness of fear is seized on, and irregularly but admirably attributed by the fancy to the drift of the banners. Compare Solomon's Song where the imagination stays not at the outside, but dwells on the fearful emotion itself?

> "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning; fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"

§ 9. Fancy is never serious.

Now, if this be the prevailing characteristic of the two faculties, it is evident that certain other collateral differences will result from it. Fancy, as she stays at the externals, can never feel. She is one of the hardest hearted of the intellectual faculties, or rather one of the most purely and simply intellectual. She cannot be made serious,* no edge-tools but she will play with; whereas the imagination is in all things the reverse. She cannot be but serious; she sees too far, too darkly, too solemnly, too earnestly, ever to smile. There is something in the heart of everything, if we can reach it, that we shall not be inclined to laugh at. The *ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα* of the sea is on its surface, not in the deep.

§ 10. Want of seriousness the bar to high art at the present time.

And thus there is reciprocal action between the intensity of moral feeling and the power of imagination; for, on the one hand, those who have keenest sympathy are those who look closest and pierce deepest, and hold securest; and, on the other, those who have so pierced and seen the melancholy deeps of things, are filled with the most intense passion and gentleness of sympathy. Hence, I suppose that the powers of the imagination may always

* Fancy, in her third function may, however, become serious, and gradually rise into imagination in doing so. Compare Chap. IV. § 5.

be tested by accompanying tenderness of emotion, and thus, (as Byron said,) there is no tenderness like Dante's, neither any intensity nor seriousness like his, such seriousness that it is incapable of perceiving that which is commonplace or ridiculous, but fuses all down into its white-hot fire; and, on the other hand, I suppose the chief bar to the action of imagination, and stop to all greatness in this present age of ours, is its mean and shallow love of jest and jeer, so that if there be in any good and lofty work a flaw or failing, or undipped vulnerable part where sarcasm may stick or stay, it is caught at, and pointed at, and buzzed about, and fixed upon, and stung into, as a recent wound is by flies, and nothing is ever taken seriously nor as it was meant, but always, if it may be, turned the wrong way, and misunderstood; and while this is so, there is not, nor cannot be any hope of achievement of high things; men dare not open their hearts to us, if we are to broil them on a thorn-fire.

§ 11. Imagination is quiet; fancy, restless.

This, then, is one essential difference between imagination and fancy, and another is like it and resultant from it, that the imagination being at the heart of things, poises herself there, and is still, quiet, and brooding; comprehending all around her with her fixed look, but the fancy staying at the outside of things, cannot see them all at once, but runs hither and thither, and round and about to see more and more, bounding merrily from point to point, and glittering here and there, but necessarily always settling, if she settle at all, on a point only, never embracing the whole. And from these single points she can strike out analogies and catch resemblances, which, so far as the point she looks at is concerned, are true, but would be false, if she could see through to the other side. This, however, she cares not to do, the point of contact is enough for her, and even if there be a gap left between the two things and they do not quite touch, she will spring from one to the other like an electric spark, and be seen brightest in her leaping.

§ 12. The detailing operation of fancy,

Now these differences between the imagination and the fancy hold, not only in the way they lay hold of separate conceptions, but even in the points they occupy of time, for the fancy loves to run hither and thither

in time, and to follow long chains of circumstances from link to link; but the imagination, if it may, gets holds of a moment or link in the middle that implies all the rest, and fastens there. Hence Fuseli's aphorism, "Invention never suffers the action to expire, nor the spectator's fancy to consume itself in preparation, or stagnate into repose. It neither begins from the egg, nor coldly gathers the remains."

In Retsch's illustrations to Schiller's Kampf mit dem Drachen, we have an instance, miserably feeble indeed, but characteristic, and suited to our present purpose, of the detailing, finishing action of the fancy. The dragon is drawn from head to tail, vulture eyes, serpent teeth, forked tongue, fiery crest, armor, claws and coils as grisly as may be; his den is drawn, and all the dead bones in it, and all the savage forest-country about it far and wide; we have him from the beginning of his career to the end, devouring, rampant, victorious over whole armies, gorged with death; we are present at all the preparations for his attack, see him receive his death-wound, and our anxieties are finally becalmed by seeing him lie peaceably dead on his back.

All the time we have never got into the dragon heart, we have never once felt real pervading horror, nor sense of the creature's being; it is throughout nothing but an ugly composition of claw and scale. Now take up Turner's Jason, Liber Studiorum, and observe how the imagination can concentrate all this, and infinitely more, into one moment. No far forest country, no secret paths, nor cloven hills, nothing but a gleam of pale horizontal sky, that broods over pleasant places far away, and sends in, through the wild overgrowth of the thicket, a ray of broken daylight into the hopeless pit. No flaunting plumes nor brandished lances, but stern purpose in the turn of the crestless helmet, visible victory in the drawing back of the prepared right arm behind the steady point. No more claws, nor teeth, nor manes, nor stinging tails. We have the dragon, like everything else, by the middle. We need see no more of him. All his horror is in that fearful, slow, grinding upheaval of the single coil. Spark after spark of it, ring after ring, is sliding into the light, the slow glitter steals along him step by step, broader

§ 13. And suggestive, of the imagination.

and broader, a lighting of funeral lamps one by one, quicker and quicker; a moment more, and he is out upon us, all crash and blaze among those broken trunks;—but he will be nothing then to what he is now.

§ 14. This suggestiveness how opposed to vacancy.

Now, it is necessary here very carefully to distinguish between that character of the work which depends on the imagination of the beholder, and that which results from the imagination of the artist, for a work is often called imaginative when it merely leaves room for the action of the imagination; whereas though nearly all imaginative works do this, yet it may be done also by works that have in them no imagination at all. A few shapeless scratches or accidental stains on a wall; or the forms of clouds, or any other complicated accidents, will set the imagination to work to coin something out of them, and all paintings in which there is much gloom or mystery, possess therein a certain sublimity owing to the play given to the beholder's imagination, without, necessarily, being in the slightest degree imaginative themselves. The vacancy of a truly imaginative work results not from absence of ideas, or incapability of grasping and detailing them, but from the painter having told the whole pith and power of his subject and disdaining to tell more, and the sign of this being the case is, that the imagination of the beholder is forced to act in a certain mode, and feels itself overpowered and borne away by that of the painter, and not able to defend itself, nor go which way it will, and the value of the work depends on the truth, authority, and inevitability of this suggestiveness, and on the absolute right choice of the critical moment. Now observe in this work of Turner's, that the whole value of it depends on the character of curve assumed by the serpent's body; for had it been a mere semicircle, or gone down in a series of smaller coils, it would have been in the first case, ridiculous, as false and unlike a serpent, and in the second, disgusting, nothing more than an exaggerated viper, but it is that *coming straight* at the right hand which suggests the drawing forth of an enormous weight, and gives the bent part its springing look, that frightens us. Again, remove the light trunk* on the left, and observe how useless all the gloom of the

* I am describing from a proof: in bad impressions this trunk is darkened.

picture would have been, if this trunk had not given it depth and *hollowness*. Finally and chiefly, observe that the painter is not satisfied even with all the suggestiveness thus obtained, but to make sure of us, and force us, whether we will or no, to walk his way, and not ours, the trunks of the trees on the right are all cloven into yawning and writhing heads and bodies, and alive with dragon energy all about us, note especially the nearest with its gaping jaws and claw-like branch at the seeming shoulder; a kind of suggestion which in itself is not imaginative, but merely fanciful, (using the term fancy in that third sense not yet explained, corresponding to the third office of imagination;) but it is imaginative in its present use and application, for the painter addresses thereby that morbid and fearful condition of mind which he has endeavored to excite in the spectator, and which in reality would have seen in every trunk and bough, as it penetrated into the deeper thicket, the object of its terror.

It is nevertheless evident, that however suggestive the work or picture may be, it cannot have effect unless we are ourselves both watchful of its very hint, and capable of understanding and carrying it out, and although I think that this power of continuing or accepting the direction of feeling given is less a peculiar gift, like that of the original seizing, than a faculty dependent on attention, and improvable by cultivation; yet, to a certain extent, the imaginative work will not, I think, be rightly esteemed except by a mind of some corresponding power; not but that there is an intense enjoyment in minds of feeble yet light conception in the help and food they get from those of stronger thought; but a certain imaginative susceptibility is at any rate necessary, and above all things, earnestness and feeling, so that assuredly a work of high conceptive dignity will be always incomprehensible and valueless except in those who go to it in earnest and give it time; and this is peculiarly the case when the imagination acts not merely on the immediate subject, nor in giving a fanciful and peculiar character to prominent objects, as we have just seen, but busies itself throughout in expressing occult and far-sought sympathies in every minor detail, of which action the most sublime instances are found in the works of Tintoret, whose intensity of imagination is such that there is

§ 15. Imagination addresses itself to imagination.

Instances from the works of Tintoret.

not the commonest subject to which he will not attach a range of suggestiveness almost limitless, nor a stone, leaf, or shadow, nor anything so small, but he will give it meaning and oracular voice.

§ 16. The Entombment.

In the centre of the gallery at Parma, there is a canvas of Tintoret's, whose sublimity of conception and grandeur of color are seen in the highest perfection, by their opposition to the morbid and vulgar sentimentalism of Correggio. It is an Entombment of Christ, with a landscape distance, of whose technical composition and details I shall have much to say hereafter, at present I speak only of the thought it is intended to convey. An ordinary or unimaginative painter would have made prominent, among his objects of landscape, such as might naturally be supposed to have been visible from the sepulchre, and shown with the crosses of Calvary, some portion of Jerusalem, or of the Valley of Jehoshaphat. But Tintoret has a far higher aim. Dwelling on the peculiar force of the event before him, as the fulfilment of the final prophecy respecting the passion, "He made his grave with the wicked and with the *rich* in his death," he desires to direct the mind of the spectator to this receiving of the body of Christ, in its contrast with the houseless birth and the desert life. And, therefore, behind the ghastly tomb-grass that shakes its black and withered blades above the rocks of the sepulchre, there is seen, not the actual material distance of the spot itself, (though the crosses are shown faintly,) but that to which the thoughtful spirit would return in vision, a desert place, where the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, and against the barred twilight of the melancholy sky are seen the mouldering beams and shattered roofing of a ruined cattle-shed, the canopy of the nativity.

§ 17. The Annunciation.

Let us take another instance. No subject has been more frequently or exquisitely treated by the religious painters than that of the Annunciation, though as usual, the most perfect type of its pure ideal has been given by Angelico, and by him with the most radiant consummation (so far as I know) in a small reliquary in the sacristy of St^a. Maria Novella. The background there, however, is altogether decorative; but in the fresco of the

corridor of St. Mark's, the concomitant circumstances are of exceeding loveliness. The Virgin sits in an open loggia, resembling that of the Florentine church of L'Annunziata. Before her is a meadow of rich herbage, covered with daisies. Behind her is seen through the door at the end of the loggia, her chamber with its single grated window, through which a star-like beam of light falls into the silence. All is exquisite in feeling, but not inventive nor imaginative. Severe would be the shock and painful the contrast, if we could pass in an instant from that pure vision to the wild thought of Tintoret. For not in meek reception of the adoring messenger, but startled by the rush of his horizontal and rattling wings, the virgin sits, not in the quiet loggia, not by the green pasture of the restored soul, but houseless, under the shelter of a palace vestibule ruined and abandoned, with the noise of the axe and the hammer in her ears, and the tumult of a city round about her desolation. The spectator turns away at first, revolted, from the central object of the picture, forced painfully and coarsely forward, a mass of shattered brickwork, with the plaster mildewed away from it, and the mortar mouldering from its seams; and if he look again, either at this or at the carpenter's tools beneath it, will perhaps see in the one and the other, nothing more than such a study of scene as Tintoret could but too easily obtain among the ruins of his own Venice, chosen to give a coarse explanation of the calling and the condition of the husband of Mary. But there is more meant than this. When he looks at the composition of the picture, he will find the whole symmetry of it depending on a narrow line of light, the edge of a carpenter's square, which connects these unused tools with an object at the top of the brickwork, a white stone, four square, the corner-stone of the old edifice, the base of its supporting column. This, I think, sufficiently explains the typical character of the whole. The ruined house is the Jewish dispensation, that obscurely arising in the dawning of the sky is the Christian; but the corner-stone of the old building remains, though the builder's tools lie idle beside it, and the stone which the builders refused is become the Headstone of the corner.

In this picture, however, the force of the thought hardly atones for the painfulness of the scene and the turbulence of its

feeling. The power of the master is more strikingly shown in his treatment of a subject which, however important, and however deep in its meaning, supplies not to the ordinary painter material enough ever to form a picture of high interest; the Baptism of Christ. From the purity of Giotto to the intolerable, inconceivable brutality of Salvator,* every order of feeling has been displayed in its treatment; but I am aware of no single case, except this of which I am about to speak, in which it has formed an impressive picture.

§ 18. The Baptism of Christ. Its treatment by various painters.

Giotto's, in the Academy of Florence, engraved in the series just published, (Galleria delle belle Arti,) is one of the most touching I know, especially in the reverent action of the attendant angels, and Leonardo's angel in that of Andrea del Verrocchio is very beautiful, but the event is one whose character and importance are ineffable upon the features: the descending dove hardly affects us, because its constant symbolical occurrence hardens us, and makes us look on it as a mere type or letter, instead of the actual presence of the Spirit; and by all the sacred painters the power that might be put into the landscape is lost, for though their use of foliage and distant sky or mountain is usually very admirable, as we shall see in the fifth chapter, yet they cannot deal with near water or rock, and the hexagonal and basaltic protuberances of their river shore are I think too painful to be endured even by the most acceptant mind, as eminently in that of Angelico, in the Vita di Christo, which, as far as I can judge, is a total failure in action, expression, and all else; and in general it is in this subject especially, that the greatest painters show their weakness. For this reason, I suppose, and feeling the difficulty of it, Tintoret has thrown into it his utmost strength, and it becomes noble in his hands

* The picture is in the Guadagni palace. It is one of the most important landscapes Salvator ever painted. The figures are studied from street beggars. On the one side of the river, exactly opposite the point where the Baptism of Christ takes place, the painter, with a refinement of feeling peculiarly his own, has introduced some ruffians stripping off their shirts to bathe. He is fond of this incident. It occurs again in one of the marines of the Pitti palace, with the additional interest of a foreshortened figure, swimming on its back, feet foremost, exactly in the stream of light to which the eye is principally directed.

by his most singularly imaginative expression, not only of the immediate fact, but of the whole train of thought of which it is suggestive; and by his considering the baptism not only as the submission of Christ to the fulfilment of all righteousness, but as the opening of the earthly struggle with the prince of the powers of the air, which instantly beginning in the temptation, ended only on the cross.

§ 19. By Tintoret.

The river flows fiercely under the shadow of a great rock. From its opposite shore, thickets of close, gloomy foliage rise against the rolling chasm of heaven, through which breaks the brightness of the descending Spirit. Across these, dividing them asunder, is stretched a horizontal floor of flaky cloud, on which stand the hosts of heaven. Christ kneels upon the water, and does not sink; the figure of St. John is indistinct, but close beside his raised right arm there is a spectre in the black shade; the fiend, harpy-shaped, hardly seen, glares down upon Christ with eyes of fire, waiting his time. Beneath this figure there comes out of the mist a dark hand, the arm unseen, extended to a net in the river, the spars of which are in the shape of a cross. Behinds this the roots and under stems of the trees are cut away by the cloud, and beneath it, and through them, is seen a vision of wild, melancholy, boundless light, the sweep of the desert, and the figure of Christ is seen therein alone, with his arms lifted as in supplication or ecstacy, borne of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

There are many circumstances which combine to give to this noble work a more than usually imaginative character. The symbolical use of the net, which is the cross net still used constantly in the canals of Venice, and common throughout Italy, is of the same character as that of the carpenter's tools in the Annunciation; but the introduction of the spectral figure is of bolder reach, and yet more, that vision of the after temptation which is expressly indicated as a subject of thought rather than of sight, because it is in a part of the scene, which in *fact* must have been occupied by the trunks of the trees whose tops are seen above; and another circumstance completes the mystic character of the whole, that the flaky clouds which support the angelic hosts take on the right, where the light first falls upon

them, the shape of the head of a fish, the well-known type both of the baptismal sacrament, and of Christ.

But the most exquisite instance of this imaginative power occurs in an incident in the background of the Crucifixion. I will not insult this marvellous picture by an effort at a verbal account of it. I would not whitewash it with praise, and I refer to it only for the sake of two thoughts peculiarly illustrative of the intellectual faculty immediately under discussion. In the common and most catholic treatment of the subject, the mind is either painfully directed to the bodily agony, coarsely expressed by outward anatomical signs, or else it is permitted to rest on that countenance inconceivable by man at any time, but chiefly so in this its consummated humiliation. In the first case, the representation is revolting; in the second, inefficient, false, and sometimes blasphemous. None even of the greatest religious painters have ever, so far as I know, succeeded here; Giotto and Angelico were cramped by the traditional treatment, and the latter especially, as before observed, is but too apt to indulge in those points of vitiated feeling which attained their worst development among the Byzantines: Perugino fails in his Christ in almost every instance (of other men than these after them we need not speak.) But Tintoret here, as in all other cases, penetrating into the root and deep places of his subject, despising all outward and bodily appearances of pain, and seeking for some means of expressing, not the rack of nerve or sinew, but the fainting of the deserted Son of God before his Eloi cry, and yet feeling himself utterly unequal to the expression of this by the countenance, has on the one hand filled his picture with such various and impetuous muscular exertion that the body of the Crucified is, by comparison, in perfect repose, and on the other has cast the countenance altogether into shade. But the agony is told by this, and by this only, that though there yet remains a chasm of light on the mountain horizon where the earthquake darkness closes upon the day, the broad and sunlike glory about the head of the Redeemer has become wan, and of the color of ashes.*

§ 20. The Crucifixion.

* This circumstance, like most that lie not at the surface, has escaped Fuseli, though his remarks on the general tone of the picture are very good, as well as his opposition of it to the treatment of Rubens. (Lecture IX.)

But the great painter felt he had something more to do yet. Not only that agony of the Crucified, but the tumult of the people, that rage which invoked his blood upon them and their children. Not only the brutality of the soldier, the apathy of the centurion, nor any other merely instrumental cause of the Divine suffering, but the fury of his own people, the noise against him of those for whom he died, were to be set before the eye of the understanding, if the power of the picture was to be complete. This rage, be it remembered, was one of disappointed pride; and the disappointment dated essentially from the time, when but five days before, the King of Zion came, and was received with hosannahs, riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. To this time, then, it was necessary to direct the thoughts, for therein are found both the cause and the character, the excitement of, and the witness against, this madness of the people. In the shadow behind the cross, a man, riding on an ass colt, looks back to the multitude, while he points with a rod to the Christ crucified. The ass is feeding on the *remnants* of *withered palm-leaves*.

With this master-stroke I believe I may terminate all illustration of the peculiar power of the imagination over the feelings of the spectator, by the elevation into dignity and meaning of the smallest accessory circumstances. But I have not yet sufficiently dwelt on the fact from which this power arises, the absolute truth of statement of the central fact as it was, or must have been. Without this truth, this awful first moving principle, all direction of the feelings is useless. That which we cannot excite, it is of no use to know how to govern.

I have before alluded, Sect. I. Chap. XIV., to the painfulness of Raffaelle's treatment of the massacre of the innocents. Fuseli affirms of it that, "in dramatic gradation he disclosed all the mother through every image of pity and of terror." If this be so, I think the philosophical spirit has prevailed over the imaginative. The imagination never errs, it sees all that is, and all the relations and bearings of it, but it would not have confused the mortal frenzy of maternal terror with various development of maternal character. Fear, rage, and agony, at their utmost pitch, sweep away all character: humanity itself would be lost in maternity, the

§ 21. The Massacre of Innocents.

woman would become the mere personification of animal fury or fear. For this reason all the ordinary representations of this subject are, I think, false and cold: the artist has not heard the shrieks, nor mingled with the fugitives, he has sat down in his study to twist features methodically, and philosophize over insanity. Not so Tintoret. Knowing or feeling, that the expression of the human face was in such circumstances not to be rendered, and that the effort could only end in an ugly falsehood, he denies himself all aid from the features, he feels that if he is to place himself or us in the midst of that maddened multitude, there can be no time allowed for watching expression. Still less does he depend on details of murder or ghastliness of death; there is no blood, no stabbing or cutting, but there is an awful substitute for these in the chiaroscuro. The scene is the outer vestibule of a palace, the slippery marble floor is fearfully barred across by sanguine shadows, so that our eyes seem to become bloodshot and strained with strange horror and deadly vision; a lake of life before them, like the burning seen of the doomed Moabite on the water that came by the way of Edom; a huge flight of stairs, without parapet, descends on the left; down this rush a crowd of women mixed with the murderers; the child in the arms of one has been seized by the limbs, she hurls herself over the edge, and falls head downmost, dragging the child out of the grasp by her weight;—she will be dashed dead in a second: two others are farther in flight, they reach the edge of a deep river,—the water is beat into a hollow by the force of their plunge;—close to us is the great struggle, a heap of the mothers entangled in one mortal writhe with each other and the swords, one of the murderers dashed down and crushed beneath them, the sword of another caught by the blade and dragged at by a woman's naked hand; the youngest and fairest of the women, her child just torn away from a death grasp and clasped to her breast with the grip of a steel vice, falls backwards helplessly over the heap, right on the sword points; all knit together and hurled down in one hopeless, frenzied, furious abandonment of body and soul in the effort to save. Their shrieks ring in our ears till the marble seems rending around us, but far back, at the bottom of the stairs, there is something in the shadow like a heap of clothes.

It is a woman, sitting quiet,—quite quiet—still as any stone, she looks down steadfastly on her dead child, laid along on the floor before her, and her hand is pressed softly upon her brow.

This, to my mind, is the only imaginative; that is, the only true, real, heartfelt representation of the being and actuality of the subject in existence.* I should exhaust the patience of the reader if I were to dwell at length on the various stupendous developments of the imagination of Tintoret in the Scuola di San Rocco alone. I would fain join a while in that solemn pause of the journey into Egypt, where the silver boughs of the shadowy trees lace with their tremulous lines the alternate folds of fair clouds, flushed by faint crimson light, and lie across the streams of blue between those rosy islands, like the white wakes of wandering ships; or watch beside the sleep of the disciples among those massy leaves that lie so heavily on the dead of the night beneath the descent of the angel of the agony, and toss fearfully above the motion of the torches as the troop of the betrayer emerges out of the hollows of the olives; or wait through the hour of accusing beside the judgment seat of Pilate, where all is unseen, unfelt, except the one figure that stands with its head bowed down, pale like a pillar of moonlight, half bathed in the glory of the Godhead, half wrapt in the whiteness of the shroud. Of these and all the other thoughts of indescribable power that are now fading from the walls of those neglected chambers, I may perhaps endeavor at some future time to preserve some image and shadow more faithfully than by words; but I shall at present terminate our series of illustrations by reference to a work of less touching, but more tremendous appeal, the Last Judgment in the Church of Santa Maria dell' Orto. In this subject, almost all realizing or local statement had been carefully avoided by the most powerful painters, they judging it better to represent its chief circumstances as generic thoughts, and present them to the mind in a typical or abstract form. In the judgment of Angelico the treatment is purely typical, a long Campo santo, composed of two lines of

§ 22. Various works in the Scuola di San Rocco.

§ 23. The Last Judgment. How treated by various painters.

* Note the shallow and uncomprehending notice of this picture by Fuseli. His description of the treatment of it by other painters is however true, terse, and valuable.

graves, stretches away into the distance; on the left side of it rise the condemned; on the right the just. With Giotto and Orcagna, the conception, though less rigid, is equally typical, no effort being made at the suggestion of space, and only so much ground represented as is absolutely necessary to support the near figures and allow space for a few graves. Michael Angelo in no respect differs in his treatment, except that his figures are less symmetrically grouped, and a greater conception of space is given by their various perspective. No interest is attached to his background in itself. Fra Bartolomeo, never able to grapple with any species of sublimity except that of simple religious feeling, fails most signally in this mighty theme.* His group of the dead, including not more than ten or twelve figures, occupies the foreground only, behind them a vacant plain extends to the foot of a cindery volcano, about whose mouth several little black devils like spiders are skipping and crawling. The judgment of quick and dead is thus expressed as taking place in about a rood square, and on a dozen of people at a time; the whole of the space and horizon of the sky and land being left vacant, and the presence of the Judge of all the earth made more finite than the sweep of a whirlwind or a thunder-storm.

By Tintoret only has this unimaginable event been grappled with in its verity; not typically nor symbolically, but as they may see it who shall not sleep, but be changed. Only one traditional circumstance he has received with Dante and Michael Angelo, the boat of the condemned; but the impetuosity of his mind bursts out even in the adoption of this image, he has not stopped at the scowling ferryman of the one, nor at the sweeping blow and demon dragging of the other, but, seized Hylas-like by the limbs, and tearing up the earth in his agony, the victim is dashed into his destruction; nor is it the sluggish Lethe, nor the fiery lake that bears the cursed vessel, but the oceans of the earth and the waters of the firmament gathered into one white, ghastly cataract, the river of the wrath of God, roaring down into the gulf where the world has melted with its fervent heat, choked with the ruin

§ 24. By Tintoret.

* Fresco in an out-house of the Ospedale St^a. Maria Nuova at Florence.

of nations, and the limbs of its corpses tossed out of its whirling, like water-wheels. Bat like, out of the holes and caverns and shadows of the earth, the bones gather, and the clay-heaps heave, rattling and adhering into half-kneaded anatomies, that crawl, and startle, and struggle up among the putrid weeds, with the clay clinging to their clotted hair, and their heavy eyes sealed by the earth darkness yet, like his of old who went his way unseeing to Siloam Pool; shaking off one by one the dreams of the prison-house, hardly hearing the clangor of the trumpets of the armies of God, blinded yet more, as they awake, by the white light of the new Heaven, until the great vortex of the four winds bears up their bodies to the judgment seat: the firmament is all full of them, a very dust of human souls, that drifts, and floats, and falls in the interminable, inevitable light; the bright clouds are darkened with them as with thick snow, currents of atom life in the arteries of heaven, now soaring up slowly, farther, and higher, and higher still, till the eye and the thought can follow no farther, borne up, wingless, by their inward faith and by the angel powers invisible, now hurled in countless drifts of horror before the breath of their condemnation.

§ 25. The imaginative verity, how distinguished from realism.

Now, I wish the reader particularly to observe throughout all these works of Tintoret, the distinction of the imaginative verity from falsehood on the one hand, and from realism on the other. The power of every picture depends on the penetration of the imagination into the TRUE nature of the thing represented, and on the utter scorn of the imagination for all shackles and fetters of mere external fact that stand in the way of its suggestiveness. In the Baptism it cuts away the trunks of trees as if they were so much cloud or vapor, that it may exhibit to the thought the completed sequency of the scene;* in the Massacre, it covers the marble floor with visionary light, that it may strike terror into the spectator without condescending to butchery; it defies the bare fact, but creates in him the fearful feeling; in the Crucifixion it annihilates locality, and brings the palm-leaves to Cal-

* The same thing is done yet more boldly in the large composition of the ceiling; the plague of fiery serpents; a part of the host, and another sky horizon are seen through an opening in the ground.

vary, so only that it may bear the mind to the mount of Olives, as in the entombment it brings the manger to Jerusalem, that it may take the heart to Bethlehem; and all this it does in the daring consciousness of its higher and spiritual verity, and in the entire knowledge of the fact and substance of all that it touches. The imaginary boat of the demon angel expands the rush of the visible river into the descent of irresistible condemnation; but to make that rush and roar felt by the eye and heard by the ear, the rending of the pine branches above the cataract is taken directly from nature; it is an abstract of Alpine storm. Hence while we are always placed face to face with whatever is to be told, there is in and beyond its reality a voice supernatural; and that which is doubtful in the vision has strength, sinew, and assuredness, built up in it by fact.

§ 26. The imagination how manifested in sculpture.

Let us, however, still advance one step farther, and observe the imaginative power deprived of all aid from chiaroscuro, color, or any other means of concealing the frame-work of its thoughts.

It was said by Michael Angelo that "non ha l'ottimo scultore alcun concetto, Ch'un marmo solo in se non circoscriva," a sentence which, though in the immediate sense intended by the writer it may remind us a little of the indignation of Boileau's Pluto, "Il s'ensuit de la que tout ce qui se peut dire de beau, est dans les dictionnaires,—il n'y a que les paroles qui sont transposées," yet is valuable, because it shows us that Michael Angelo held the imagination to be entirely expressible in rock, and therefore altogether independent, in its own nature, of those aids of color and shade by which it is recommended in Tintoret, though the sphere of its operation is of course by these incalculably extended. But the presence of the imagination may be rendered in marble as deep, thrilling, and awful as in painting, so that the sculptor seek for the soul and govern the body thereby.

§ 27. Bandinelli, Canova, Mino da Fiesole.

Of unimaginative work, Bandinelli and Canova supply us with characteristic instances of every kind, the Hercules and Cacus of the former, and its criticism by Cellini, will occur at once to every one; the disgusting statue now placed so as to conceal Giotto's important tempera picture in Santa Croce is a better instance, but a

still more impressive lesson might be received by comparing the inanity of Canova's garland grace, and ball-room sentiment with the intense truth, tenderness, and power of men like Mino da Fiesole, whose chisel leaves many a hard edge, and despises down and dimple, but it seems to cut light and carve breath, the marble burns beneath it, and becomes transparent with very spirit. Yet Mino stopped at the human nature; he saw the soul, but not the ghostly presences about it; it was reserved for Michael Angelo to pierce deeper yet, and to see the indwelling angels. No man's soul is alone: Laocoon or Tobit, the serpent has it by the heart or the angel by the hand, the light or the fear of the spiritual things that move beside it may be seen on the body; and that bodily form with Buonaroti, white, solid, distinct material, though it be, is invariably felt as the instrument or the habitation of some infinite, invisible power. The earth of the Sistine Adam that begins to burn; the woman embodied burst of adoration from his sleep; the twelve great torrents of the Spirit of God that pause above us there, urned in their vessels of clay; the waiting in the shadow of futurity of those through whom the promise and presence of God went down from the Eve to the Mary, each still and fixed, fixed in his expectation, silent, foreseeing, faithful, seated each on his stony throne, the building stones of the word of God, building on and on, tier by tier, to the Refused one, the head of the corner; not only these, not only the troops of terror torn up from the earth by the four quartered winds of the Judgment, but every fragment and atom of stone that he ever touched became instantly inhabited by what makes the hair stand up and the words be few; the St. Matthew, not yet disengaged from his sepulchre, bound hand and foot by his grave clothes, it is left for us to loose him; the strange spectral wreath of the Florence Pieta, casting its pyramidal, distorted shadow, full of pain and death, among the faint purple lights that cross and perish under the obscure dome of St^a. Maria del Fiore, the white lassitude of joyous limbs, panther like, yet passive, fainting with their own delight, that gleam among the Pagan formalisms of the Uffizii, far away, showing themselves in their lustrous lightness as the waves of an Alpine torrent do by their dancing among the dead

§ 28. Michael Angelo.

stones, though the stones be as white as they :* and finally, and perhaps more than all, those four ineffable types, not of darkness nor of day—not of morning nor evening, but of the departure and the resurrection, the twilight and the dawn of the souls of men—together with the spectre sitting in the shadow of the niche above them ; † all these, and all else that I could name of his forming, have borne, and in themselves retain and exercise the same inexplicable power—inexplicable because proceeding from an imaginative perception almost superhuman, which goes whither we cannot follow, and is where we cannot come ;

* The Bacchus. There is a small statue opposite it also—unfinished ; but "a spirit still."

† I would have insisted more on the ghostly vitality of this dreadful statue ; but the passage referring to it in Rogers's Italy supersedes all further description. I suppose most lovers of art know it by heart.

> "Nor then forget that chamber of the dead,
> Where the gigantic shapes of Night and Day,
> Turned into stone, rest everlastingly ;
> Yet still are breathing, and shed round at noon
> A twofold influence,—only to be felt—
> A light, a darkness, mingling each with each ;
> Both, and yet neither. There, from age to age,
> Two ghosts are sitting on their sepulchres.
> That is the Duke Lorenzo. Mark him well.
> He meditates, his head upon his hand.
> What from beneath his helm-like bonnet scowls?
> Is it a face, or but an eyeless skull?
> 'Tis lost in shade ; yet, like the basilisk,
> It fascinates, and is intolerable.
> His mien is noble, most majestical!
> Then most so, when the distant choir is heard
> At morn or eve—nor fail thou to attend
> On that thrice-hallowed day, when all are there ;
> When all, propitiating with solemn songs,
> Visit the Dead. Then wilt thou feel his power!

It is strange that this should be the only written instance (as far as I recollect) of just and entire appreciation of Michael Angelo's spiritual power. It is perhaps owing to the very intensity of his imagination that he has been so little understood—for, as I before said, imagination can never be met by vanity, nor without earnestness. His Florentine followers saw in him an anatomist and posture-master—and art was finally destroyed by the influence over admiring idiocy of the greatest mind that art ever inspired.

throwing naked the final, deepest root of the being of man, whereby he grows out of the invisible, and holds on his God home.*

* I have not chosen to interrupt the argument respecting the essence of the imaginative faculty by any remarks on the execution of the imaginative hand; but we can hardly leave Tintoret and Michael Angelo without some notice of the pre-eminent power of execution exhibited by both of them, in consequence of their vigor and clearness of conception; nor without again warning the lower artist from confounding this velocity of decision and impatience with the velocity of affectation or indolence. Every result of real imagination we have seen to be a truth of some sort; and it is the characteristic of truth to be in some way tangible, seizable, distinguishable, and clear, as it is of falsehood to be obscure, confused, and confusing. Not but that many, if not most truths have a dark side, a side by which they are connected with mysteries too high for us,—nay, I think it is commonly but a poor and miserable truth which the human mind can walk all round, but at all events they have one side by which we can lay hold of them, and feel that they are downright adamant, and that their form, though lost in cloud here and there, is unalterable and real, and not less real and rocky because infinite, and joined on, St. Michael's mount-like to a far mainland. So then, whatever the real imagination lays hold of, as it is a truth, does not alter into anything else as the imaginative part works at it and feels over it and finds out more of it, but comes out more and more continually, all that is found out pointing to and indicating still more behind, and giving additional stability and reality to that which is discovered already. But if it be fancy or any other form of pseudo-imagination which is at work, then that which it gets hold of may not be a truth, but only an idea, which will keep giving way as soon as we try to take hold of it and turning into something else, so that as we go on copying it, every part will be inconsistent with all that has gone before, and at intervals it will vanish altogether, and leave blanks which must be filled up by any means at hand. And in these circumstances, the painter, unable to seize his thought, because it has not substance nor bone enough to bear grasping, is liable to catch at every line that he lays down, for help and suggestion, and to be led away by it to something else, which the first effort to realize dissipates in like manner, placing another phantom in its stead, until out of the fragments of these successive phantoms he has glued together a vague, mindless, involuntary whole, a mixture of all that was trite or common in each of the successive conceptions, for that is necessarily what is first caught a heap of things with the bloom off and the chill on, laborious, unnatural, inane, with its emptiness disguised by affectation, and its tastelessness salted by extravagance.

Necessarily, from these modes of conception, three vices of execution must result; and these are necessarily found in all those parts of the work where any trust has been put in conception, and only to be avoided in portions of actual portraiture (for a thoroughly unimaginative painter can make

Now, in all these instances, let it be observed, for it is to that end alone that I have been arguing all along, that the virtue of the imagination is its reaching, by intuition and intensity of gaze, (not by reasoning, but by its authoritative opening and revealing power,) a more essential truth than is seen at the surface of things. I repeat that it matters not whether the reader is willing to call this faculty imagination or no, I do not care about the name; but I would be understood when I speak of imagination hereafter, to mean this, the true foundation of all art which exercises eternal authority over men's minds; (all other imagination than this is either secondary and contemplative, or utterly spurious;) the base of whose authority and being

§ 29. Recapitulation. The perfect function of the imagination is the intuitive perception of ultimate truth.

no use of a study—all his studies are guesses and experiments, all are equally wrong, and so far felt to be wrong by himself, that he will not work by any of them, but will always endeavor to improve upon them in the picture, and so lose the use of them). These three vices of execution are then—first, feebleness of handling, owing to uncertainty of intention; secondly, intentional carelessness of handling, in the hope of getting by accident something more than was meant; and lastly, violence and haste of handling, in the effort to secure as much as possible of the obscure image of which the mind feels itself losing hold. (I am throughout, it will be observed, attributing right feeling to the unimaginative painter; if he lack this, his execution may be cool and determined, as he will set down falsehood without blushing, and ugliness without suffering.) Added to these various evidences of weakness, will be the various vices assumed for the sake of concealment; morbid refinements disguising feebleness—or insolence and coarseness to cover desperation. When the imagination is powerful, the resulting execution is of course the contrary of all this: its first steps will commonly be impetuous, in clearing its ground and getting at its first conception—as we know of Michael Angelo in his smiting his blocks into shape, (see the passage quoted by Sir Charles Clarke in the Essay on Expression, from Blaise de Vigenere,) and as it is visible in the handling of Tintoret always: as the work approaches completion, the stroke, while it remains certain and firm, because its end is always known, may frequently become slow and careful, both on account of the difficulty of following the pure lines of the conception, and because there is no fear felt of the conception's vanishing before it can be realized; but generally there is a certain degree of impetuosity visible in the works of all the men of high imagination, when they are not working from a study, showing itself in Michael Angelo by the number of blocks he left unfinished, and by some slight evidences in those he completed of his having worked painfully towards the close; so that, except the Duke Lorenzo, the Bacchus of the Florentine gallery, and

is its perpetual thirst of truth and purpose to be true. It has no food, no delight, no care, no perception, except of truth; it is forever looking under masks, and burning up mists; no fairness of form, no majesty of seeming will satisfy it; the first condition of its existence is incapability of being deceived; and though it sometimes dwells upon and substantiates the fictions of fancy, yet its own operation is to trace to their farthest limit the true laws and likelihoods even of the fictitious creation. This has been well explained by Fuseli, in his allusion to the Centaur of Zeuxis; and there is not perhaps a greater exertion of imaginative power than may be manifested in following out to their farthest limits the necessary consequences of such arbitrary combination; but let not the jests of the fancy be con-

the Pieta of Genoa. I know not any of his finished works in which his mind is as mightily expressed as in his marble sketches; only, it is always to be observed that impetuosity or rudeness of hand is not necessarily—and, if imaginative, is never—carelessness. In the two landscapes at the end of the Scuola di San Rocco, Tintoret has drawn several large tree trunks with two strokes of his brush—one for the dark, and another for the light side; and the large rock at the foot of the picture of the Temptation is painted with a few detached touches of gray over a flat brown ground; but the touches of the tree-trunks have been followed by the mind as they went down with the most painful intensity through their every undulation; and the few gray strokes on the stone are so considered that a better stone cone could not be painted if we took a month to it: and I suppose, generally, it would be utterly impossible to give an example of execution in which less was left to accident, or in which more care was concentrated in every stroke, than the seemingly regardless and impetuous handling of this painter.

On the habit of both Tintoret and Michael Angelo to work straight forward from the block and on the canvas, without study or model, it is needless to insist; for though this is one of the most amazing proofs of their imaginative power, it is a dangerous precedent. No mode of execution ought ever to be taught to a young artist as better than another; he ought to understand the truth of what he has to do, felicitous execution will follow as a matter of course; and if he feels himself capable of getting at the right at once, he will naturally do so without reference to precedent. He ought to hold always that his duty is to attain the highest result he can,—but that no one has any business with the means or time he has taken. If it can be done quickly, let it be so done; if not, let it be done at any rate. For knowing his way he is answerable, and therefore must not walk *doubtingly;* but no one can blame him for walking *cautiously*, if the way be a narrow one, with a slip on each side. He may pause, but he must not hesitate,—and tremble, but must not vacillate.

founded with that after serious work of the imagination which gives them all the nervous verity and substance of which they are capable. Let not the monsters of Chinese earthenware be confounded with the Faun, Satyr, or Centaur.

§ 30. Imagination how vulgarly understood.

How different this definition of the imagination may be from the idea of it commonly entertained among us, I can hardly say, because I have a very indistinct idea of what is usually meant by the term. I hear modern works constantly praised as being imaginative, in which I can trace no virtue of any kind; but simple, slavish, unpalliated falsehood and exaggeration; I see not what merit there can be in pure, ugly, resolute fiction; it is surely easy enough to be wrong; there are many ways of being unlike nature. I understand not what virtue that is which entitles one of these ways to be called imaginative, rather than another; and I am still farther embarrassed by hearing the portions of those works called especially imaginative in which there is the most effort at minute and mechanical statement of contemptible details, and in which the artist would have been as actual and absolute in imitation as an echo, if he had known how. Against convictions which I do not understand, I cannot argue; but I may warn the artist that imagination of this strange kind, is not capable of bearing the time test; nothing of its doing ever has continued its influence over men; and if he desires to take place among the great men of older time, there is but one way for it; and one kind of imagination that will stand the immortal light: I know not how far it is by effort cultivable; but we have evidence enough before us to show in what direction that effort must be made.

§ 31. How its cultivation is dependent on the moral feelings.

We have seen (§ 10) that the imagination is in no small degree dependent on acuteness of moral emotion; in fact, all moral truth can only thus be apprehended—and it is observable, generally, that all true and deep emotion is imaginative, both in conception and expression; and that the mental sight becomes sharper with every full beat of the heart; and, therefore, all egotism, and selfish care, or regard, are in proportion to their constancy, destructive of imagination; whose play and power depend altogether on our

being able to forget ourselves and enter like possessing spirits into the bodies of things about us.

Again, as the life of imagination is in the discovering of truth, it is clear it can have no respect for sayings or opinions: knowing in itself when it has invented truly—restless and tormented except when it has this knowledge, its sense of success or failure is too acute to be affected by praise or blame. Sympathy it desires—but can do without; of opinions it is regardless, not in pride, but because it has no vanity, and is conscious of a rule of action and object of aim in which it cannot be mistaken; partly, also, in pure energy of desire and longing to do and to invent more and more, which suffer it not to suck the sweetness of praise—unless a little, with the end of the rod in its hand, and without pausing in its march. It goes straight forward up the hill; no voices nor mutterings can turn it back, nor petrify it from its purpose.*

§ 32. On independence of mind,

Finally, it is evident, that like the theoretic faculty, the imagination must be fed constantly by external nature—after the illustrations we have given, this may seem mere truism, for it is clear that to the exercise of the penetrative faculty a subject of penetration is necessary; but I note it because many painters of powerful mind have been lost to the world by their suffering the restless writhing of their imagination in its cage to take place of its healthy and exulting activity in the fields of nature. The most imaginative men always study the hardest, and are the most thirsty for new knowledge. Fancy plays like a squirrel in its circular prison, and is happy; but imagination is a pilgrim on the earth—and her home is in heaven. Shut her from the fields of the celestial mountains—bar her from breathing their lofty, sun-warmed air; and we may as well turn upon her the last bolt of the tower of famine, and give the keys to the keeping of the wildest surge that washes Capraja and Gorgona.

§ 33. And on habitual reference to nature.

* That which we know of the lives of M. Angelo and Tintoret is eminently illustrative of this temper.

CHAPTER IV.

OF IMAGINATION CONTEMPLATIVE.

WE have, in the two preceding chapters, arrived at definite conclusions respecting the power and essence of the imaginative faculty. In these two acts of penetration and combination, its separating and characteristic attributes are entirely developed; it remains for us only to observe a certain habit or mode of operation in which it frequently delights, and by which it addresses itself to our perceptions more forcibly, and asserts its presence more distinctly than in those mighty but more secret workings wherein its life consists.

§ 1. Imagination contemplative is not part of the essence, but only a habit or mode of the faculty.

In our examination of the combining imagination, we chose to assume the first or simple conception to be as clear in the absence as in the presence of the object of it. This, I suppose, is in point of fact never the case, nor is an approximation to such distinctness of conception always a characteristic of the imaginative mind. Many persons have thorough and felicitous power of drawing from memory, yet never originate a thought, nor excite an emotion.

The form in which conception actually occurs to ordinary minds appears to derive value and preciousness from that indefiniteness which we alluded to in the second chapter, (§ 2,) for there is an unfailing charm in the memory and anticipation of things beautiful, more sunny and spiritual than attaches to their presence; for with their presence it is possible to be sated, and even wearied, but with the imagination of them never; in so far that it needs some self-discipline to prevent the mind from falling into a morbid condition of dissatisfaction with all that it immediately possesses, and continual longing for things absent; and yet I think this charm is not justly to be attributed to the mere vagueness and

§ 2. The ambiguity of conception.

uncertainty of the conception, except thus far, that of objects whose substantial presence was ugly or painful the sublimity and impressiveness, if there were any, is retained in the conception, while the sensual offensiveness is withdrawn; thus circumstances of horror may be safely touched in verbal description, and for a time dwelt upon by the mind, as often by Homer and Spenser, (by the latter frequently with too much grossness, as in the description of the combat of the Red-Cross Knight with Errour,) which could not for a moment be regarded or tolerated in their reality, or on canvas; and besides this mellowing and softening operation on those it retains, the conceptive faculty has the power of letting go many of them altogether out of its groups of ideas, and retaining only those where the meminisse juvabit will apply; and in this way the entire group of memories becomes altogether delightful; but of those parts of anything which are in themselves beautiful, I think the indistinctness no benefit, but that the brighter they are the better; and that the peculiar charm we feel in conception results from its grasp and blending of ideas rather than from their obscurity, for we do not usually recall, as we have seen, one part at a time only of a pleasant scene, one moment only of a happy day; but together with each single object we summon up a kind of crowded and involved shadowing forth of all the other glories with which it was associated, and into every moment we concentrate an epitome of the day; and it will happen frequently that even when the visible objects or actual circumstances are not in numbers remembered; yet the feeling and joy of them is obtained we know not how or whence, and so with a kind of conceptive burning glass we bend the sunshine of all the day, and the fulness of all the scene upon every point that we successively seize; and this together with more vivid action of fancy, for I think that the wilful and playful seizure of the points that suit her purpose and help her springing, whereby she is distinguished from simple conception, takes place more easily and actively with the memory of things than in presence of them. But, however this be, and I confess that there is much that I cannot satisfactorily to myself unravel with respect to the nature of simple conception; it is evident that this agreeableness, whatever it be, is not by art attainable, for

§ 3. Is not in itself capable of adding to the charm of fair things.

all art is in some sort realization; it may be the realization of obscurity or indefiniteness, but still it must differ from the mere conception of obscurity and indefiniteness; so that whatever emotions depend absolutely on imperfectness of conception, as the horror of Milton's Death, cannot be rendered by art, for art can only lay hold of things which have shape, and destroys by its touch the fearfulness or pleasurableness of those which shape have none.

But on this indistinctness of conception, itself comparatively valueless and unaffecting, is based the operation of the imaginative faculty with which we are at present concerned, and in which its glory is consummated: whereby, depriving the subject of material and bodily shape, and regarding such of its qualities only as it chooses for particular purpose, it forges these qualities together in such groups and forms as it desires, and gives to their abstract being consistency and reality, by striking them as it were with the die of an image belonging to other matter, which stroke having once received, they pass current at once in the peculiar conjunction and for the peculiar value desired.

§ 4. But gives to the imagination its regarding power over them.

Thus, in the description of Satan quoted in the first chapter, "And like a comet burned," the bodily shape of the angel is destroyed, the inflaming of the formless spirit is alone regarded; and this, and his power of evil associated in one fearful and abstract conception are stamped to give them distinctness and permanence with the image of the comet, "that fires the length of Ophiuchus huge." Yet this could not be done, but that the image of the comet itself is in a measure indistinct, capable of awful expansion, and full of threatening and fear. Again, in his fall, the imagination binds up the thunder, the resistance, the massy prostration, separates them from the external form, and binds them together by the help of that image of the mountain half sunk; which again would be unfit but for its own indistinctness, and for that glorious addition "with all his pines," whereby a vitality and spear-like hostility are communicated to its falling form, and the fall is marked as not utter subversion, but sinking only, the pines remaining in their uprightness, and unity, and threatening of darkness upon the descended precipice: and again in that yet more noble passage at the close of

the fourth book, where almost every operation of the contemplative imagination is concentrated; the angelic squadron first gathered into one burning mass by the single expression "sharpening in mooned horns," then told out in their unity and multitude and stooped hostility, by the image of the wind upon the corn; Satan endowed with godlike strength and endurance in that mighty line, "like Teneriffe or Atlas, unremoved," with infinitude of size the next instant, and with all the vagueness and terribleness of spiritual power, by the "horror plumed," and the "*what seemed* both spear and shield."

§5. The third office of fancy distinguished from imagination contemplative.

The third function of fancy, already spoken of as subordinate to this of the imagination, is the highest of which she is capable; like the imagination, she beholds in the things submitted to her treatment things different from the actual; but the suggestions she follows are not in their nature essential in the object contemplated; and the images resulting, instead of illustrating, may lead the mind away from it, and change the current of contemplative feeling; for as in her operation parallel to imagination penetrative, we saw her dwelling upon external features, while the nobler sister, faculty, entered within, so now, when both, from what they see and know in their immediate object, are conjuring up images illustrative or elevatory of it, the fancy necessarily summons those of mere external relationship, and therefore of unaffecting influence; while the imagination, by every ghost she raises, tells tales about the prison-house, and therefore never loses her power over the heart, nor her unity of emotion. On the other hand, the regardant or contemplative action of fancy is in this different from, and in this nobler, than that mere seizing and likeness-catching operation we saw in her before; that when contemplative, she verily believes in the truth of the vision she has summoned, loses sight of actuality, and beholds the new and spiritual image faithfully and even seriously; whereas before, she summoned no spiritual image, but merely caught the vivid actuality, or the curious resemblance of the real object; not that these two operations are separate, for the fancy passes gradually from mere vivid right of reality, and witty suggestion of likeness, to a ghostly sight of what is unreal; and through this, in proportion as she begins to feel,

she rises towards and partakes of imagination itself, for imagination and fancy are continually united, and it is necessary, when they are so, carefully to distinguish the feelingless part which is fancy's, from the sentient part, which is imagination's. Let us take a few instances. Here is fancy, first, very beautiful, in her simple capacity of likeness-catching :—

> " To-day we purpose—aye, this hour we mount
> To spur three leagues towards the Apennine.
> Come down, we pray thee, ere the *hot sun count*
> *His dewy rosary* on the eglantine."

Seizing on the outside resemblances of bead form, and on the slipping from their threading bough one by one, the fancy is content to lose the heart of the thing, the solemnity of prayer : or perhaps I do the glorious poet wrong in saying this, for the sense of a sun worship and orison in beginning its race, may have been in his mind ; and so far as it was so, the passage is imaginative and not fanciful. But that which most readers would accept from it, is the mere flash of the external image, in whose truth the fancy herself does not yet believe and therefore is not yet contemplative. Here, however, is fancy believing in the images she creates :—

> " It feeds the quick growth of the serpent-vine,
> And the dark linked ivy tangling wild
> And budding, blown, or odor faded blooms,
> Which *star the winds with points of colored light*
> As they rain through them ; and *bright golden globes*
> *Of fruit suspended in their own green heaven.*"

It is not, observe, a mere likeness that is caught here ; but the flowers and fruit are entirely deprived by the fancy of their material existence, and contemplated by her seriously and faithfully as stars and worlds ; yet it is only external likeness that she catches ; she forces the resemblance, and lowers the dignity of the adopted image.

Next take two delicious stanzas of fancy regardant, (believing in her creations,) followed by one of heavenly imagination, from Wordsworth's address to the daisy :—

"A Nun demure—of lowly port;
Or sprightly maiden—of Love's court,
In thy simplicity the sport
Of all temptations.
A Queen in crown of rubies drest,
A starveling in a scanty vest,
Are all as seems to suit thee best,—
Thy appellations.

I see thee glittering from afar,
And then thou art a pretty star,—
Not quite so fair as many are
In heaven above thee.
Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest;—
May peace come never to his nest
Who shall reprove thee.

Sweet flower—for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee, and to that cleave fast.
Sweet silent creature,
That breath'st with me, in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature."

Observe how spiritual, yet how wandering and playful the fancy is in the first two stanzas, and how far she flies from the matter in hand, never stopping to brood on the character of any one of the images she summons, and yet for a moment truly seeing and believing in them all; while in the last stanza the imagination returns with its deep feeling to the heart of the flower, and "*cleaves fast*" to that. Compare the operation of the imagination in Coleridge, on one of the most trifling objects that could possibly have been submitted to its action.

§ 6. Various instances.

"The thin blue flame
Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not:
Only that film which fluttered on the grate
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
Methinks its motion in this hush of nature
Gives it dim sympathies with me, who live,
Making it a companionable form,

Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling spirit
By its own moods interprets; everywhere,
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
And makes a toy of thought."

Lastly, observe the sweet operation of fancy regardant, in the following well-known passage from Scott, where both her beholding and transforming powers are seen in their simplicity.

"The rocky summits—split and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement.—
Or seemed fantastically set
With cupola or minaret.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lacked they many a banner fair,
For from their shivered brows displayed,
Far o'er th' unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dew-drop sheen,
The brier-rose fell, in streamers green,—
And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes
Waved in the west wind's summer sighs."

Let the reader refer to this passage, with its pretty tremulous conclusion above the pine tree, "where glistening streamers waved and danced," and then compare with it the following, where the imagination operates on a scene nearly similar.

"Gray rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemm'd
The struggling brook; tall spires of windle strae
Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope,
And nought but knarled roots of ancient pines,
Branchless and blasted, clench'd with grasping roots
Th' unwilling soil. . . . .
. . . . . A gradual change was here,
Yet ghastly. For, *as fast years flow away,*
The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin
And white; and where irradiate dewy eyes
Had shone, gleam stony orbs; so from his steps
Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade
Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds
And musical motions. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . Where the pass extends
Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,
And seems with its accumulated crags
To overhang the world; for wide expand

Beneath the wan stars, and descending moon,
Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams,
Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom
Of leaden-colored even, and *fiery hills*
Mingling their flames with twilight on the verge
Of the remote horizon. The near scene
In naked, and severe simplicity
Made contrast with the universe. A pine
Rock-rooted, stretch'd athwart the vacancy
Its swinging boughs, to each *inconstant blast*
Yielding one only response at each pause,
In most familiar cadence, with the howl,
The thunder, and the hiss of *homeless* streams,
Mingling its solemn song.

In this last passage, the mind never departs from its solemn possession of the solitary scene, the imagination only giving weight, meaning, and strange human sympathies to all its sights and sounds.

In that from Scott,*—the fancy, led away by the outside resemblance of floating form and hue to the banners, loses the feeling and possession of the scene, and places herself in circumstances of character completely opposite to the quietness and grandeur of the natural objects; this would have been unjustifiable, but that the resemblance occurs to the mind of the monarch, rather than to that of the poet; and it is that, which of all others, would have been the most likely to occur at the time; in this point of view it has high imaginative propriety. Of the same fanciful character is that transformation of the tree trunks into dragons noticed before in Turner's Jason; and in the same way this becomes imaginative as it exhibits the effect

* Let it not be supposed that I mean to compare the sickly dreaming of Shelley over clouds and waves with the masculine and magnificent grasp of men and things which we find in Scott; it only happens that these two passages are more illustrative, by the likeness of the scenery they treat, than any others I could have opposed: and that Shelley is peculiarly distinguished by the faculty of contemplative imagination. Scott's healthy and truthful feeling would not allow him to represent the benighted hunter provoked by loss of game, horse, and way at once, as indulging in any more exalted flights of imagination than those naturally consequent on the contrast between the night's lodging he expected, and that which befitted him.

of fear in disposing to morbid perception. Compare with it the real and high action of the imagination on the same matter in Wordsworth's Yew trees (which I consider the most vigorous and solemn bit of forest landscape ever painted) :—

> "Each particular trunk a growth
> Of intertwisted fibres serpentine,
> Up coiling and inveterately convolved,
> *Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks*
> *That threaten the profane.*"

It is too long to quote, but the reader should refer to it : let him note especially, if painter, that pure touch of color, "by sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged."

In the same way, the blasted trunk on the left, in Turner's drawing of the spot where Harold fell at the battle of Hastings, takes, where its boughs first separate, the shape of the head of an arrow ; this, which is mere fancy in itself, is imagination as it supposes in the spectator an excited condition of feeling dependent on the history of the spot.

I have been led perhaps into too great detail in illustrating these points ; but I think it is of no small importance to prove how in all cases the imagination is based upon, and appeals to, a deep heart feeling ; and how faithful and earnest it is in contemplation of the subject matter, never losing sight of it, or disguising it, but depriving it of extraneous and material accidents, and regarding it in its disembodied essence. I have not, however, sufficiently noted in opposition to it, that diseased action of the fancy which depends more on nervous temperament than intellectual power ; and which, as in dreaming, fever, insanity, and other morbid conditions of mind, is frequently a source of daring and inventive conception ; and so the visionary appearances resulting from various disturbances of the frame by passion, and from the rapid tendency of the mind to invest with shape and intelligence the active influences about it, as in the various demons, spirits, and fairies of all imaginative nations ; which, however, I consider are no more to be ranked as right creations of fancy or imagination than things actually seen and heard ; for the action of the nerves is I suppose the same, whether externally caused, or from within,

§ 7. Morbid or nervous fancy.

although very grand imagination may be shown by the intellectual anticipation and realization of such impressions; as in that glorious vignette of Turner's to the voyage of Columbus. "Slowly along the evening sky they went." Note especially therein, how admirably true to the natural form, and yet how suggestive of the battlement he has rendered the level flake of evening cloud.

I believe that it is unnecessary for me to enter into farther detail of illustration respecting these points; for fuller explanation of the operations of the contemplative faculty on things verbally expressible, the reader may be referred to Wordsworth's preface to his poems; it only remains for us, here, to examine how far this imaginative or abstract conception is to be conveyed by the material art of the sculptor or the painter.

§ 8. The action of contemplative imagination is not to be expressed by art.

Now, it is evident that the bold action of either the fancy or the imagination, dependent on a bodiless and spiritual image of the object, is not to be by lines or colors represented. We cannot, in the painting of Satan fallen, suggest any image of pines or crags,—neither can we assimilate the brier and the banner, nor give human sympathy to the motion of the film, nor voice to the swinging of the pines.

Yet certain powers there are, within due limits, of marking the thing represented with an ideal character; and it was to these powers that I alluded in defining the meaning of the term ideal, in the thirteenth chapter of the preceding section. For it is by this operation that the productions of high art are separated from those of the realist.

§ 9. Except under narrow limits.—1st. Abstract rendering of form without color.

And, first, there is evidently capability of separating color and form, and considering either separately. Form we find abstractedly considered by the sculptor, how far it would be possible to advantage a statue by the addition of color, I venture not to affirm; the question is too extensive to be here discussed. High authorities and ancient practice, are in favor of color; so the sculpture of the middle ages: the two statues of Mino da Fiesole in the church of St^a. Caterina at Pisa have been colored, the irises of the eyes painted dark, and the hair gilded, as also I think the Madonna in St^a. Maria della

Spina; the eyes have been painted in the sculptures of Orcagna in Or San Michele, but it looks like a remnant of barbarism, (compare the pulpit of Guida da Como, in the church of San Bartolomeo at Pistoja,) and I have never seen color on any solid forms, that did not, to my mind, neutralize all other power; the porcelains of Luca della Robbia are painful examples, and in lower art, Florentine mosaic in relief; gilding is more admissible, and tells sometimes sweetly upon figures of quaint design, as on the pulpit of St^a. Maria Novella, while it spoils the classical ornaments of the mouldings. But the truest grandeur of sculpture I believe to be in the white form; something of this feeling may be owing to the difficulty, or rather the immediately, of obtaining truly noble color upon it, but if we could color the Elgin marbles with the flesh tint of Giorgione, I had rather not have it done.

§ 10. Of color without form.

Color, without form, is less frequently obtainable, and it may be doubted whether it be desirable: yet I think that to the full enjoyment of it, a certain abandonment of form is necessary; sometimes by reducing it to the shapeless glitter of the gem, as often Tintoret and Bassano; sometimes by loss of outline and blending of parts, as Turner; sometimes by flatness of mass, as often Giorgione and Titian. How far it is possible for the painter to represent those mountains of Shelley as the poet sees them, "mingling *their flames* with twilight," I cannot say; but my impression is, that there is no true abstract mode of considering color; and that all the loss of form in the works of Titian or Turner, is not ideal, but the representation of the natural conditions under which bright color is seen; for form is always in a measure lost by nature herself when color is very vivid.

§ 11. Or of both without texture.

Again, there is capability of representing the essential character, form, and color of an object, without external texture. On this point much has been said by Reynolds and others, and it is, indeed, perhaps the most unfailing characteristic of great manner in painting. Compare a dog of Edwin Landseer with a dog of Paul Veronese. In the first, the outward texture is wrought out with exquisite dexterity of handling, and minute attention to all the accidents of curl and gloss which can give appearance of reality, while the hue

and power of the sunshine, and the truth of the shadow on all these forms is necessarily neglected, and the large relations of the animal as a mass of color to the sky or ground, or other parts of the picture, utterly lost. This is realism at the expense of ideality, it is treatment essentially unimaginative.* With Veronese, there is no curling nor crisping, no glossiness nor sparkle, hardly even hair, a mere type of hide, laid on with a few scene-painter's touches. But the essence of dog is there, the entire magnificent, generic animal type, muscular and living, and with broad, pure, sunny daylight upon him, and bearing his true and harmonious relation of color to all color about him. This is ideal treatment.

The same treatment is found in the works of all the greatest men, they all paint the lion more than his mane, and the horse rather than his hide; and I think also they are more careful to obtain the right expression of large and universal light and color, than local tints; for the warmth of sunshine, and the force of sun-lighted hue are always sublime on whatever subject they may be exhibited; and so also are light and shade, if grandly arranged, as may be well seen in an etching of Rembrandt's of a spotted shell, which he has made altogether sublime by broad truth and large ideality of light and shade; and so I have seen frequent instances of very grand ideality in treatment of the most commonplace still life, by our own Hunt, where the petty glosses and delicacies, and minor forms, are all merged in a broad glow of suffused color; so also in pieces of the same kind by Etty, where, however, though the richness and play of color are greater, and the arrangement grander, there is less expression of light, neither is there anything in modern art that can be set beside some choice passages of Hunt in this respect.

§ 12. Abstraction or typical representation of animal form.

Again, it is possible to represent objects capable of various accidents in a generic or symbolical form.

* I do not mean to withdraw the praise I have given, and shall always be willing to give such pictures as the Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner, and to all in which the character and inner life of animals are developed. But all lovers of art must regret to find Mr. Landseer wasting his energies on such inanities as the "Shoeing," and sacrificing color, expression, and action, to an imitation of glossy hide.

How far this may be done with things having necessary form, as animals, I am not prepared to say. The lions of the Egyptian room in the British Museum, and the fish beside Michael Angelo's Jonah, are instances; and there is imaginative power about both which we find not in the more perfectly realized Florentine boar, nor in Raffaelle's fish of the draught. And yet the propriety and nobility of these types depend on the architectural use and character of the one, and on the typical meaning of the other: we should be grieved to see the forms of the Egyptian lion substituted for those of Raffaelle's in its struggle with Samson, nor would the whale of Michael Angelo be tolerated in the nets of Gennesaret. So that I think it is only when the figure of the creature stands not for any representation of vitality, but merely for a letter or type of certain symbolical meaning, or else is adopted as a grand form of decoration or support in architecture, that such generalization is allowable, and in such circumstances I think it necessary, always provided it be based, as in the instances given I conceive it to be, upon thorough knowledge of the creature symbolized and wrought out by a master hand; and these conditions being observed, I believe it to be right and necessary in architecture to modify all animal forms by a severe architectural stamp, and in symbolical use of them, to adopt a typical form, to which practice the contrary, and its evil consequences are ludicrously exhibited in the St. Peter of Carlo Dolci in the Pitti palace, which owing to the prominent, glossy-plumed and crimson-combed cock, is liable to be taken for the portrait of a poulterer, only let it be observed that the treatment of the animal form here is offensive, not only from its realization, but from the pettiness and meanness of its realization; for it might, in other hands but Carlo Dolci's, have been a sublime cock, though a real one, but in his, it is fit for nothing but the spit. Compare as an example partly of symbolical treatment, partly of magnificent realization, that supernatural lion of Tintoret, in the picture of the Doge Loredano before the Madonna, with the plumes of his mighty wings clashed together in cloudlike repose, and the strength of the sea winds shut within their folding. And note farther the difference between the typical use of the animal, as in this case, and that of the fish of Jonah, (and

§ 13. Either when it is symbolically used,

again the fish before mentioned whose form is indicated in the clouds of the baptism), and the actual occurrence of the creature itself, with concealed meaning, as the ass colt of the crucifixion, which it was necessary to paint as such, and not as an ideal form.

§ 14. Or in architectural decoration.

I cannot enter here into the question of the exact degree of severity and abstraction necessary in the forms of living things architecturally employed; my own feeling on the subject is, though I dare not lay it down as a principle, (with the Parthenon pediment standing against me like the shield of Ajax,) that no perfect representation of animal form is right in architectural decoration. For my own part, I had much rather see the metopes in the Elgin room of the British Museum, and the Parthenon without them, than have them together, and I would not surrender, in an architectural point of view, one mighty line of the colossal, quiet, life-in-death statue mountains in Egypt with their narrow fixed eyes and hands on their rocky limbs, nor one Romanesque façade with its porphyry mosaic of indefinable monsters, nor one Gothic moulding of rigid saints and grinning goblins, for ten Parthenons; and, I believe, I could show some rational ground for this seeming barbarity if this were the place to do so, but at present I can only ask the reader to compare the effect of the so-called barbarous ancient mosaics on the front of St. Mark's, as they have been recorded, happily, by the faithfulness of the good Gentile Bellini, in one of his pictures now in the Venice gallery, with the veritably barbarous pictorial substitutions of the fifteenth century, (one only of the old mosaics remains, or did remain till lately, over the northern door, but it is probably by this time torn down by some of the Venetian committees of taste,) and also I would have the old portions of the interior ceiling, or of the mosaics of Murano and Torcello, and the glorious Cimabue mosaic of Pisa, and the roof of the Baptistery at Parma, (that of the Florence Baptistery is a bad example, owing to its crude whites and complicated mosaic of small forms,) all of which are as barbarous as they can well be, in a certain sense, but mighty in their barbarism, with any architectural decorations whatsoever, consisting of professedly perfect animal forms, from the vile frescoes of Federigo Zuccaro at Florence to the

ceiling of the Sistine, and again compare the professedly perfect sculpture of Milan Cathedral with the statues of the porches of Chartres; only be it always observed that it is not rudeness and ignorance of art, but intellectually awful abstraction that I uphold, and also be it noted that in all ornament, which takes place in the general effect merely as so much fretted stone, in capitals and other pieces of minute detail, the forms may be, and perhaps ought to be, elaborately imitative; and in this respect again the capitals of St. Mark's church, and of the Doge's palace at Venice may be an example to the architects of all the world, in their boundless inventiveness, unfailing elegance, and elaborate finish; there is more mind poured out in turning a single angle of that church than would serve to build a modern cathedral;* and of the careful finish of the work, this may serve for example, that one of the capitals of the Doge's palace is formed of eight heads of different animals, of which one is a bear's with a honeycomb in the mouth, whose carved *cells* are *hexagonal.*

§ 15. Exception in delicate and superimposed ornament.

So far, then, of the abstraction proper to architecture, and to symbolical uses, of which I shall have occasion to speak hereafter at length, referring to it only at present as one of the operations of imagination contemplative; other abstractions there are which are necessarily consequent on the imperfection of materials, as of the hair in sculpture, which is necessarily treated in masses that are in no sort imitative, but only stand for hair, and have the grace, flow, and feeling of it without the texture or division, and other abstractions there are in which the form of one thing is fancifully indicated in the matter of another; as in phantoms and cloud

§ 16. Abstraction necessary from imperfection of materials.

* I have not brought forward any instances of the imaginative power in architecture, as my object is not at present to exhibit its operation in all matter, but only to define its essence; but it may be well to note, in our own new houses of Parliament, how far a building approved by a committee of Taste, may proceed without manifestation either of imagination or composition; it remains to be seen how far the towers may redeem it; and I allude to it at present unwillingly, and only in the desire of influencing, so far as I may, those who have the power to prevent the adoption of a design for a bridge to take place of Westminster, which was exhibited in 1844 at the Royal Academy, professing to be in harmony with the new building, but which was fit only to carry a railroad over a canal.

shapes, the use of which, in mighty hands, is often most impressive, as in the cloudy charioted Apollo of Nicolo Poussin in our own gallery, which the reader may oppose to the substantial Apollo, in Wilson's Niobe, and again the phantom vignette of Turner already noticed; only such operations of the imagination are to be held of lower kind and dangerous consequence, if frequently trusted in, for those painters only have the right imaginative power who can set the supernatural form before us fleshed and boned like ourselves.* Other abstractions occur, frequently, of things which have much accidental variety of form, as of waves, on Greek sculptures in successive volutes, and of clouds often in supporting volumes in the sacred pictures; but these I do not look upon as results of imagination at all, but mere signs and letters; and whenever a very highly imaginative mind touches them, it always realizes as far as may be. Even Titian is content to use at the top of his St. Pietro Martiri, the conventional, round, opaque cloud, which cuts his trees open like a gouge; but Tintoret, in his picture of the Golden Calf, though compelled to represent the Sinai under conventional form, in order that the receiving of the tables might be seen at the top of it, yet so soon as it is possible to give more truth, he is ready with it; he takes a grand fold of horizontal cloud straight from the flanks of the Alps, and shows the forests of the mountains through its misty volume, like sea-weed through deep sea.† Nevertheless, when the realization is impossible, bold symbolism is of the highest value, and in religious art, as we shall presently see, even necessary, as of the rays of light in the Titian woodcut of St. Francis before noticed; and sometimes the attention is directed by some such strange form to the meaning of the image, which may be missed if it remains in its natural purity, (as, I suppose, few in looking at the Cephalus and Procris of Turner, note the sympathy of those faint rays that are just drawing back and dying between the trunks of the far-off forest, with the ebbing life of the nymph; unless, indeed, they happen to recollect the same sym-

§ 17. Abstractions of things capable of varied accident are not imaginative.

§ 18. Yet sometimes valuable.

* Comp. Ch. V. § 5.

† All the clouds of Tintoret are sublime; the worst that I know in art are Correggio's, especially in the Madonna della Scudella, and Dome of Parma.

pathy marked by Shelley in the Alastor;) but the imagination is not shown in any such modifications; however, in some cases they may be valuable (in the Cephalus they would be utterly destructive,) and I note them merely in consequence of their peculiar use in religious art, presently to be examined.

§ 19. Exaggeration. Its laws and limits. First, in scale of representation.

The last mode we have here to note in which the imagination regardant may be expressed in art is exaggeration, of which, as it is the vice of all bad artists, and may be constantly resorted to without any warrant of imagination, it is necessary to note strictly the admissible limits.

In the first place, a colossal statue is necessarily no more an exaggeration of what it represents than a miniature is a diminution, it need not be a representation of a giant, but a representation, on a large scale, of a man; only it is to be observed, that as any plane intersecting the cone of rays between us and the object, must receive an image smaller than the object; a small image is rationally and completely expressive of a larger one; but not a large of a small one. Hence I think that all statues above the Elgin standard, or that of Michael Angelo's Night and Morning, are, in a measure, taken by the eye for representations of giants, and I think them always disagreeable. The amount of exaggeration admitted by Michael Angelo is valuable because it separates the emblematic from the human form, and gives greater freedom to the grand lines of the frame; for notice of his scientific system of increase of size I may refer the reader to Sir Charles Bell's remarks on the statues of the Medici chapel; but there is one circumstance which Sir Charles has not noticed, and in the interpretation of which, therefore, it is likely I may be myself wrong; that the extremities are singularly small in proportion to the limbs, by which means there is an expression given of strength and activity greater than in the ordinary human type, which appears to me to be an allowance for that alteration in proportion necessitated by increase of size, of which we took note in Chap. VI. of the first section, § 10, note; not but that Michael Angelo always makes the extremities comparatively small, but smallest, comparatively, in his largest works; so I think, from the size of the head, it may be conjectured respecting the Theseus of the Elgins. Such adapta-

tions are not necessary when the exaggerated image is spectral: for as the laws of matter in that case can have no operation, we may expand the form as far as we choose, only let careful distinction be made between the size of the thing represented, and the scale of the representation. The canvas on which Fuseli has stretched his Satan in the schools of the Royal Academy is a mere concession to inability. He might have made him look more gigantic in one of a foot square.

§ 20. Secondly. Of things capable of variety of scale.

Another kind of exaggeration is of things whose size is variable to a size or degree greater than that usual with them, as in waves and mountains; and there are hardly any limits to this exaggeration so long as the laws which nature observes in her increase be observed. Thus, for instance: the form and polished surface of a breaking ripple three inches high, are not representation of either the form or the surface of the surf of a storm, nodding ten feet above the beach; neither would the cutting ripple of a breeze upon a lake if simply exaggerated, represent the forms of Atlantic surges; but as nature increases her bulk, she diminishes the angles of ascent, and increases her divisions; and if we would represent surges of size greater than ever existed, which it is lawful to do, we must carry out these operations to still greater extent. Thus, Turner, in his picture of the Slave Ship, divides the whole sea into two masses of enormous swell, and conceals the horizon by a gradual slope of only two or three degrees. This is intellectual exaggeration. In the Academy exhibition of 1843, there was, in one of the smaller rooms, a black picture of a storm, in which there appeared on the near sea, just about to be overwhelmed by an enormous breaker, curling right over it, an object at first sight liable to be taken for a walnut shell, but which, on close examination, proved to be a ship with mast and sail, with Christ and his twelve disciples in it. This is childish exaggeration, because it is impossible, by the laws of matter and motion, that such a breaker should ever exist. Again in mountains, we have repeatedly observed the necessary building up and multitudinous division of the higher peaks, and the smallness of the slopes by which they usually rise. We may, therefore, build up the mountain as high as we please, but we must do it in nature's way, and not in impossible

peaks and precipices; not but that a daring feature is admissible here and there, as the Matterhorn is admitted by nature; but we must not compose a picture out of such exceptions; we may use them, but they must be as exceptions exhibited. I shall have much to say, when we come to treat of the sublime, of the various modes of treating mountain form, so that at present I shall only point to an unfortunate instance of inexcusable and effectless exaggeration in the distance of Turner's vignette to Milton, (the temptation on the mountain,) and desire the reader to compare it with legitimate exaggeration, in the vignette to the second part of Jacqueline, in Rogers's poems.

Another kind of exaggeration is necessary to retain the characteristic impressions of nature on reduced scale; it is not possible, for instance, to give the leafage of trees in its proper proportion, when the trees represented are large, without entirely losing their grace of form and curvature; of this the best proof is found in the Calotype or Daguerreotype, which fail in foliage, not only because the green rays are ineffective, but because, on the small scale of the image, the reduced leaves lose their organization, and look like moss attached to sticks. In order to retain, therefore, the character of flexibility and beauty of foliage, the painter is often compelled to increase the proportionate size of the leaves, and to arrange them in generic masses. Of this treatment compare the grand examples throughout the Liber Studiorum. It is by such means only that the ideal character of objects is to be preserved; as we before observed in the 13th chapter of the first section. In all these cases exaggeration is only lawful as the sole means of arriving at truth of impression when strict fidelity is out of the question.

§ 21. Thirdly, necessary in expression of characteristic features on diminished scale.

Other modes of exaggeration there are, on which I shall not at present farther insist, the proper place for their discussion being in treating of the sublime, and these which I have at present instanced are enough to establish the point at issue, respecting imaginative verity, inasmuch as we find that exaggeration itself, if imaginative, is referred to principles of truth, and of actual being.

We have now, I think, reviewed the various modes in which imagination contemplative may be exhibited in art, and arrived

at all necessary certainties respecting the essence of the faculty: which we have found in all its three functions, associative of truth, penetrative of truth, and contemplative of truth; and having no dealings nor relations with any kind of falsity. One task, however, remains to us, namely, to observe the operation of the theoretic and imaginative faculties together, in the attempt at realization to the bodily sense of beauty supernatural and divine.

§ 22. Recapitulation.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE SUPERHUMAN IDEAL.

In our investigation in the first section of the laws of beauty, we confined ourselves to the observation of lower nature, or of humanity. We were prevented from proceeding to deduce conclusions respecting divine ideality by our not having then established any principles respecting the imaginative faculty, by which, under the discipline of the theoretic, such ideality is conceived. I had purposed to conclude the present section by a careful examination of this subject; but as this is evidently foreign to the matter immediately under discussion, and involves questions of great intricacy respecting the development of mind among those pagan nations who are supposed to have produced high examples of spiritual ideality, I believe it will be better to delay such inquiries until we have concluded our detailed observation of the beauty of visible nature; and I shall therefore at present take notice only of one or two broad principles, which were referred to, or implied, in the chapter respecting the human ideal, and without the enunciation of which, that chapter might lead to false conclusions.

§ 1. The subject is not to be here treated in detail.

There are four ways in which beings supernatural may be conceived as manifesting themselves to human sense. The first, by external types, signs, or influences; as God to Moses in the flames of the bush, and to Elijah in the voice of Horeb.

§ 2. The conceivable modes of manifestation of Spiritual Beings are four.

The second, by the assuming of a form not properly belonging to them; as the Holy Spirit of that of a Dove, the second person of the Trinity of that of a Lamb; and so such manifestations, under angelic or other form, of the first person of the Trinity, as seem to have been made to Abraham, Moses, and Ezekiel.

The third, by the manifestation of a form properly belonging

to them, but not necessarily seen; as of the Risen Christ to his disciples when the doors were shut. And the fourth, by their operation on the human form, which they influence or inspire, as in the shining of the face of Moses.

It is evident that in all these cases, wherever there is form at all, it is the form of some creature to us known. It is no new form peculiar to spirit nor can it be. We can conceive of none. Our inquiry is simply, therefore, by what modifications those creature forms to us known, as of a lamb, a bird, or a human creature, may be explained as signs or habitations of Divinity, or of angelic essence, and not creatures such as they seem.

§3. And these are in or through creature forms familiar to us.

This may be done in two ways. First, by effecting some change in the appearance of the creature inconsistent with its actual nature, as by giving it colossal size, or unnatural color, or material, as of gold, or silver, or flame, instead of flesh, or by taking away its property of matter altogether, and forming it of light or shade, or in an intermediate step, of cloud, or vapor; or explaining it by terrible concomitant circumstances, as of wounds in the body, or strange lights and seemings round about it; or by joining of two bodies together as in angels' wings. Of all which means of attaining supernatural character (which though, in their nature ordinary and vulgar, are yet effective and very glorious in mighty hands) we have already seen the limits in speaking of the imagination.

§4. Supernatural character may be impressed on these either by phenomena inconsistent with their common nature, (compare chap. 4, § 16).

But the second means of obtaining supernatural character is that with which we are now concerned, namely, retaining the actual form in its full and material presence, and without aid from any external interpretation whatsoever, to raise that form by mere inherent dignity to such a pitch of power and impressiveness as cannot but assert and stamp it for superhuman.

§5. Or by inherent Dignity.

On the north side of the Campo Santo at Pisa, are a series of paintings from the Old Testament History by Benozzo Gozzoli. In the earlier of these, angelic presences, mingled with human, occur frequently, illustrated by no awfulness of light, nor incorporeal tracing. Clear revealed they move, in human forms, in the broad daylight and on the open earth, side by

side, and hand in hand with men. But they never miss of the angel.

He who can do this has reached the last pinnacle and utmost power of ideal, or any other art. He stands in no need thenceforward, of cloud, nor lightning, nor tempest, nor terror of mystery. His sublime is independent of the elements. It is of that which shall stand when they shall melt with fervent heat, and light the firmament when the sun is as sackcloth of hair.

Let us consider by what means this has been effected, so far as they are by analysis traceable; and that is not far, for here, as always, we find that the greater part of what has been rightly accomplished has been done by faith and intense feeling, and cannot, by aid of any rules or teaching, be either tried, estimated, or imitated.

§ 6. 1st. Of the expression of Inspiration.

And first, of the expression of supernatural influence on forms actually human, as of sibyl or prophet. It is evident that not only here is it unnecessary, but we are not altogether at liberty to trust for expression to the utmost ennobling of the human form: for we cannot do more than this, when that form is to be the actual representation, and not the recipient of divine presence. Hence, in order to retain the actual humanity definitely, we must leave upon it such signs of the operation of sin and the liability to death as are consistent with human ideality, and often more than these, definite signs of immediate and active evil, when the prophetic spirit is to be expressed in men such as were Saul and Balaam; neither may we ever, with just discrimination, touch the utmost limits of beauty in human form when inspiration is to be expressed, and not angelic or divine being; of which reserve and subjection the most instructive instances are found in the works of Angelico, who invariably uses inferior types for the features of humanity, even glorified, (excepting always the Madonna,) nor ever exerts his full power of beauty either in feature or expression, except in angels or in the Madonna or in Christ. Now the expression of spiritual influence without supreme elevation of the bodily type we have seen to be a work of imagination penetrative, and we found it accomplished by Michael Angelo; but I think by him only. I am aware of no one else who, to my mind, has expressed the inspiration of prophet or sibyl; this, however, I affirm not, but

shall leave to the determination of the reader, as the principles at present to be noted refer entirely to that elevation of the creature form necessary when it is actually representative of a spiritual being.

§ 7. No representation of that which is more than creature is possible.

I have affirmed in the conclusion of the first section that "of that which is more than creature, no creature ever conceived." I think this almost self-evident, for it is clear that the illimitableness of Divine attributes cannot be by matter represented, (though it may be typefied,) and I believe that all who are acquainted with the range of sacred art will admit, not only that no representation of Christ has ever been even partially successful, but that the greatest painters fall therein below their accustomed level; Perugino and Fra Angelico especially; Leonardi has I think done best, but perhaps the beauty of the fragment left at Milan, (for in spite of all that is said of repainting and destruction, that Cenacolo is still the finest in existence) is as much dependent on the very untraceableness resulting from injury as on its original perfection. Of more daring attempts at representation of Divinity we need not speak; only this is to be noted respecting them, that though by the ignorant Romanists many such efforts were made under the idea of actual representation, (note the way in which Cellini speaks of the seal made for the Pope,) by the nobler among them I suppose they were intended, and by us at any rate they may always be received, as mere symbols, the noblest that could be employed, but as much symbols still as a triangle, or the Alpha and Omega; nor do I think that the most scrupulous amongst Christians ought to desire to exchange the power obtained by the use of this symbol in Michael Angelo's creation of Adam and of Eve for the effect which would be produced by the substitution of a triangle or any other sign in place of it. Of these efforts then we need reason no farther, but may limit ourselves to considering the purest modes of giving a conception of superhuman but still creature form, as of angels; in equal rank with whom, perhaps, we may without offence place the mother of Christ: at least we must so regard the type of the Madonna in receiving it from Romanist painters.*

* I take no note of the representation of *evil* spirits, since throughout we

And first, much is to be done by right modification of accessory circumstances, so as to express miraculous power exercised over them by the spiritual creature. There is a beautiful instance of this in John Bellini's picture of St. Jerome at Venice. The saint sits upon a rock, his grand form defined against clear green open sky; he is reading, a noble tree springs out of a cleft in the rock, bends itself suddenly back to form a rest for the volume, then shoots up into the sky. There is something very beautiful in this obedient ministry of the lower creature; but be it observed that the sweet feeling of the whole depends upon the service being such as is consistent with its nature. It is not animated, it does not *listen* to the saint, nor bend itself towards him as if in affection, this would have been mere fancy, illegitimate and effectless. But the simple bend of the trunk to receive the book is miraculous subjection of the true nature of the tree; it is therefore imaginative, and very touching.

§ 8. Supernatural character expressed by modification of accessories.

It is not often however that the religious painters even go this length; they content themselves usually with impressing on the landscape perfect symmetry and order, such as may seem consistent with, or induced by the spiritual nature they would

have been occupied in the pursuit of beauty; but it may be observed generally that there is great difficulty to be overcome in attempts of this kind, because the elevation of the form necessary to give it spirituality destroys the appearance of evil; hence even the greatest painters have been reduced to receive aid from the fancy, and to eke out all they could conceive of malignity by help of horns, hoofs, and claws. Giotto's Satan in the Campo Santo, with the serpent gnawing the heart, is fine; so many of the fiends of Orcagna, and always those of Michael Angelo. Tintoret in the Temptation, with his usual truth of invention, has represented the evil spirit under the form of a fair angel, the wings burning with crimson and silver, the face sensual and treacherous. It is instructive to compare the results of imagination associated with powerful fancy in the demons of these great painters, or even in such nightmares as that of Salvator already spoken of, Sect. I. Chap. V. § 12 (note,) with the simple ugliness of idiotic distortion in the meaningless terrorless monsters of Bronzino in the large picture of the Uffizii, where the painter, utterly uninventive, having assembled all that is abominable of hanging flesh, bony limbs, crane necks, staring eyes, and straggling hair, cannot yet by the sum and substance of all obtain as much real fearfulness as an imaginative painter could throw into the turn of a lip or the knitting of a brow.

represent. All signs of decay, disturbance, and imperfection, are also banished; and in doing this it is evident that some unnaturalness and singularity must result, inasmuch as there are no veritable forms of landscape but express or imply a state of progression or of imperfection. All mountain forms are seen to be produced by convulsion and modelled by decay; the finer forms of cloud have stories in them about storm; all forest grouping is wrought out with varieties of strength and growth among its several members, and bears evidences of struggle with unkind influences. All such appearances are banished in the supernatural landscape; the trees grow straight, equally branched on each side, and of such slight and feathery frame as shows them never to have encountered blight or frost or tempest. The mountains stand up in fantastic pinnacles; there is on them no trace of torrent, no scathe of lightning; no fallen fragments encumber their foundations, no worn ravines divide their flanks; the seas are always waveless, the skies always calm, crossed only by fair, horizontal, lightly wreathed, white clouds.

§ 9. Landscape of the religious painters. Its character is eminently symmetrical.

In some cases these conditions result partly from feeling, partly from ignorance of the facts of nature, or incapability of representing them, as in the first type of the treatment found in Giotto and his school; in others they are observed on principle, as by Benozzo Gozzoli, Perugino, and Raffaelle. There is a beautiful instance by the former in the frescoes of the Ricardi palace, where behind the adoring angel groups the landscape is governed by the most absolute symmetry; roses and pomegranates, their leaves drawn to the last rib and vein, twine themselves in fair and perfect order about delicate trellises; broad stone pines and tall cypresses overshadow them, bright birds hover here and there in the serene sky, and groups of angels, hand joined with hand, and wing with wing, glide and float through the glades of the unentangled forest. But behind the human figures, behind the pomp and turbulence of the Kingly procession descending from the distant hills the spirit of the landscape is changed. Severer mountains rise in the distance, ruder prominences and less flowery vary the nearer ground, and gloomy shadows remain unbroken beneath the forest branches.

§ 10. Landscape of Benozzo Gozzoli.

The landscape of Perugino, for grace, purity and as much of nature as is consistent with the above-named conditions, is unrivalled; and the more interesting because in him certainly whatever limits are set to the rendering of nature proceed not from incapability. The sea is in the distance almost always, then some blue promontories and undulating dewy park ground, studded with glittering trees; in the landscape of the fresco in Sta. Maria Maddalena at Florence there is more variety than is usual with him; a gentle river winds round the bases of rocky hills, a river like our own Wye or Tees in their loveliest reaches; level meadows stretch away on its opposite side; mounds set with slender-stemmed foliage occupy the nearer ground, a small village with its simple spire peeps from the forest at the bend of the valley, and it is remarkable that in architecture thus employed neither Perugino nor any other of the ideal painters ever use Italian forms but always Transalpine, both of church and castle. The little landscape which forms the background of his own portrait in the Uffizii is another highly finished and characteristic example. The landscape of Raffaelle was learned from his father, and continued for some time little modified, though expressed with greater refinement. It became afterwards conventional and poor, and in some cases altogether meaningless. The haystacks and vulgar trees behind the St. Cecilia at Bologna form a painful contrast to the pure space of mountain country in the Perugino opposite.*

§ 11. Landscape of Perugino and Raffaelle.

In all these cases, while I would uphold the landscape thus employed and treated, as worthy of all admiration, I should be sorry to advance it for imitation. What is right in its mannerism arose from keen feeling in the painter: imitated without the same feeling, it

§ 12. Such Landscape is not to be imitated.

* I have not thought it necessary to give farther instances at present, since I purpose hereafter to give numerous examples of this kind of ideal landscape. Of true and noble landscape, as such, I am aware of no instances except where least they might have been expected, among the sea-bred Venetians. Ghirlandajo shows keen, though prosaic, sense of nature in that view of Venice behind an Adoration of Magi in the Uffizii, but he at last walled himself up among gilded entablatures. Masaccio indeed has given one grand example in the fresco of the Tribute Money, but its color is now nearly lost.

would be painful; the only safe mode of following in such steps is to attain perfect knowledge of nature herself, and then to suffer our own feelings to guide us in the selection of what is fitting for any particular purpose. Every painter ought to paint what he himself loves, not what others have loved; if his mind be pure and sweetly toned, what he loves will be lovely; if otherwise, no example can guide his selection, no precept govern his hand; and farther let it be distinctly observed, that all this mannered landscape is only right under the supposition of its being a background to some supernatural presence; behind mortal beings it would be wrong, and by itself, as landscape, ridiculous; and farther, the chief virtue of it results from the exquisite refinement of those natural details consistent with its character from the botanical drawing of the flowers and the clearness and brightness of the sky.

Another mode of attaining supernatural character is by purity of color almost shadowless, no more darkness being allowed than is absolutely necessary for the explanation of the forms, and the vividness of the effect enhanced as far as may be by use of gilding, enamel, and other jewellery. I think the smaller works of Angelico are perfect models in this respect; the glories about the heads being of beaten rays of gold, on which the light plays and changes as the spectator moves; (and which therefore throw the purest flesh color out in dark relief) and such color and light being obtained by the enamelling of the angel wings as of course is utterly unattainable by any other expedient of art; the colors of the draperies always pure and pale; blue, rose, or tender green, or brown, but never dark or gloomy; the faces of the most celestial fairness, brightly flushed: the height and glow of this flush are noticed by Constantin as reserved by the older painters for spiritual beings, as if expressive of light seen through the body.

§ 13. Color, and Decoration. Their use in representations of the Supernatural.

I cannot think it necessary while I insist on the value of all these seemingly childish means when in the hands of a noble painter, to assert also their futility and even absurdity if employed by no exalted power. I think the error has commonly been on the side of scorn, and that we reject much in our foolish vanity, which if wiser and more earnest we should delight

in. But two points it is very necessary to note in the use of such accessories.

The first that the ornaments used by Angelico, Giotto, and Perugino, but especially by Angelico, are always of a generic and abstract character. They are not diamonds, nor brocades, nor velvets, nor gold embroideries; they are mere spots of gold or of color, simple patterns upon *textureless* draperies; the angel wings burn with transparent crimson and purple and amber, but they are not set forth with peacock's plumes; the golden circlets gleam with changeful light, but they are not beaded with elaborate pearls nor set with studied sapphires.

§ 14. Decoration so used must be generic.

In the works of Filippino Lippi, Mantegna, and many other painters following, interesting examples may be found of the opposite treatment; and as in Lippi the heads are usually very sweet, and the composition severe, the degrading effect of the realized decorations and imitated dress may be seen in him simply, and without any addition of painfulness from other deficiencies of feeling. The larger of the two pictures in the Tuscan room of the Uffizii, but for this defect, would have been a very noble ideal work.

The second point to be observed is that brightness of color is altogether inadmissible without purity and harmony; and that the sacred painters must not be followed in their frankness of unshadowed color unless we can also follow them in its clearness. As far as I am acquainted with the modern schools of Germany, they seem to be entirely ignorant of the value of color as an assistant of feeling, and to think that hardness, dryness, and opacity are its virtues as employed in religious art; whereas I hesitate not to affirm that in such art more than in any other, clearness, luminousness and intensity of hue are essential to right impression; and from the walls of the Arena chapel in their rainbow play of brilliant harmonies, to the solemn purple tones of Perugino's fresco in the Albizzi palace, I know not any great work of sacred art which is not as precious in color as in all other qualities (unless indeed it be a Crucifixion of Fra Angelico in the Florence Academy, which has just been glazed and pumiced and painted and varnished by the picture-cleaners until it glares from one end of

§ 15. And col r pure.

the picture gallery to the other;) only the pure white light and delicate hue of the idealists, whose colors are by preference such as we have seen to be the most beautiful in the chapter on Purity are carefully to be distinguished from the golden light and deep pitched hue of the school of Titian whose virtue is the grandeur of earthly solemnity, not the glory of heavenly rejoicing.

§ 16. Ideal form of the body itself, of what variety susceptible.

But leaving these accessory circumstances and touching the treatment of the bodily form, it is evident in the first place that whatever typical beauty the human body is capable of possessing must be bestowed upon it when it is understood as spiritual. And therefore those general proportions and types which are deducible from comparison of the nobler individuals of the race, must be adopted and adhered to; admitting among them not, as in the human ideal, such varieties as result from past suffering, or contest with sin, but such only as are consistent with sinless nature or are the signs of instantly or continually operative affections; for though it is conceivable that spirit should suffer, it is inconceivable that spiritual frame should retain like the stamped inelastic human clay, the brand of sorrow past, unless fallen.

> "His face,
> Deep scars of thunder had entrenched, and care
> Sat on his faded cheek."

Yet so far forth the angelic ideal is diminished, nor could this be suffered in pictorial representation.

§ 17. Anatomical development how far admissible.

Again, such muscular development as is necessary to the perfect beauty of the body, is to be rendered. But that which is necessary to strength, or which appears to have been the result of laborious exercise, is inadmissible. No herculean form is spiritual, for it is degrading the spiritual creature to suppose it operative through impulse of bone and sinew; its power is immaterial and constant, neither dependent on, nor developed by exertion. Generally, it is well to conceal anatomical development as far as may be; even Michael Angelo's anatomy interferes with his divinity; in the hands of lower men the angel becomes a preparation. How far it is possible to subdue or generalize the naked form

I venture not to affirm, but I believe that it is best to conceal it as far as may be, not with draperies light and undulating, that fall in with, and exhibit its principal lines, but with draperies severe and linear, such as were constantly employed before the time of Raffaelle. I recollect no single instance of a naked angel that does not look boylike or childlike, and unspiritualized; even Fra Bartolomeo's might with advantage be spared from the pictures at Lucca, and, in the hands of inferior men, the sky is merely encumbered with sprawling infants; those of Domenichino in the Madonna del Rosario, and Martyrdom of St. Agnes, are peculiarly offensive, studies of bare-legged children howling and kicking in volumes of smoke. Confusion seems to exist in the minds of subsequent painters between Angels and Cupids.

Farther, the qualities of symmetry and repose are of peculiar value in spiritual form. We find the former most earnestly sought by all the great painters in the arrangement of the hair, wherein no loosely flowing nor varied form is admitted, but all restrained in undisturbed and equal ringlets; often, as in the infant Christ of Fra Angelico, supported on the forehead in forms of sculpturesque severity. The Angel of Masaccio, in the Deliverance of Peter, grand both in countenance and motion, loses much of his spirituality because the painter has put a little too much of his own character into the hair, and left it disordered.

§ 18. Symmetry. How valuable.

Of repose, and its exalting power, I have already said enough for our present purpose, though I have not insisted on the peculiar manifestation of it in the Christian ideal as opposed to the pagan. But this, as well as all other questions relating to the particular development of the Greek mind, is foreign to the immediate inquiry, which therefore I shall here conclude in the hope of resuming it in detail after examining the laws of beauty in the inanimate creation; always, however, holding this for certain, that of whatever kind or degree the short coming may be, it is not possible but that short coming should be visible in every pagan conception, when set beside Christian; and believing, for my own part, that there is not only deficiency, but such difference in kind as must make all Greek conception full of danger to the

§ 19. The influence of Greek art, how dangerous.

student in proportion to his admiration of it; as I think has been fatally seen in its effect on the Italian schools, when its pernicious element first mingled with their solemn purity, and recently in its influence on the French historical painters: neither can I from my present knowledge fix upon an ancient statue which expresses by the countenance any one elevated character of soul, or any single enthusiastic self-abandoning affection, much less any such majesty of feeling as might mark the features for supernatural. The Greek could not conceive a spirit; he could do nothing without limbs; his god is a finite god, talking, pursuing, and going journeys;* if at any time he was touched with a true feeling of the unseen powers around him, it was in the field of poised battle, for there is something in the near coming of the shadow of death, something in the devoted fulfilment of mortal duty, that reveals the real God, though darkly; that pause on the field of Platæa was not one of vain superstition; the two white figures that blazed along the Delphic plain, when the earthquake and the fire led the charge from Olympus, were more than sunbeams on the battle dust; the sacred cloud, with its lance light and triumph singing, that went down to brood over the masts of Salamis, was more than morning mist among the olives; and yet what were the Greek's thoughts of his god of battle? No spirit power was in the vision; it was a being of clay strength and human passion, foul, fierce, and changeful; of penetrable arms and vulnerable flesh. Gather what we may of great, from pagan chisel or pagan dream, and set it beside the orderer of Christian warfare, Michael the Archangel: not Milton's "with hostile brow and visage all inflamed," not even Milton's in kingly treading of the hills of Paradise, not Raffaelle's with the expanded wings and brandished spear, but Perugino's with his triple crest of traceless plume unshaken in heaven, his hand fallen on his crossleted sword, the truth girdle binding his undinted armor; God has put his power upon him, resistless

§ 20. Its scope, how limited.

* I know not anything in the range of art more unspiritual than the Apollo Belvidere; the raising of the fingers of the right hand in surprise at the truth of the arrow is altogether human, and would be vulgar in a prince, much more in a deity. The sandals destroy the divinity of the foot, and the lip is curled with mortal passion.

radiance is on his limbs, no lines are there of earthly strength, no trace on the divine features of earthly anger; trustful and thoughtful, fearless, but full of love, incapable except of the repose of eternal conquest, vessel and instrument of Omnipotence, filled like a cloud with the victor light, the dust of principalities and powers beneath his feet, the murmur of hell against him heard by his spiritual ear like the winding of a shell on the far-off sea-shore.

§ 21. Conclusion.

It is vain to attempt to pursue the comparison; the two orders of art have in them nothing common, and the field of sacred history, the intent and scope of Christian feeling, are too wide and exalted to admit of the juxtaposition of any other sphere or order of conception; they embrace all other fields like the dome of heaven. With what comparison shall we compare the types of the martyr saints, the St. Stephen of Fra Bartolomeo, with his calm forehead crowned by the stony diadem, or the St. Catherine of Raffaelle looking up to heaven in the dawn of the eternal day, with her lips parted in the resting from her pain? or with what the Madonnas of Francia and Pinturicchio, in whom the hues of the morning and the solemnity of the eve, the gladness in accomplished promise, and sorrow of the sword-pierced heart, are gathered into one human lamp of ineffable love? or with what the angel choirs of Angelico, with the flames on their white foreheads waving brighter as they move, and the sparkles streaming from their purple wings like the glitter of many suns upon a sounding sea, listening, in the pauses of alternate song, for the prolonging of the trumpet blast, and the answering of psaltery and cymbal, throughout the endless deep and from all the star shores of heaven?

ADDENDA.

ALTHOUGH the plan of the present portion of this work does not admit of particular criticism, it will neither be useless nor irrelevant to refer to one or two works, lately before the public, in the Exhibitions of the Royal Academy, which either illustrate, or present exceptions to, any of the preceding statements. I would first mention, with reference to what has been advanced respecting the functions of Associative Imagination, the very important work of Mr. Linnell, the "Eve of the Deluge;" a picture upheld by its admirers (and these were some of the most intelligent judges of the day) for a work of consummate imaginative power; while it was pronounced by the public journals to be "a chaos of unconcocted color." If the writers for the press had been aware of the kind of study pursued by Mr. Linnell through many laborious years, characterized by an observance of nature scrupulously and minutely patient, directed by the deepest sensibility, and aided by a power of drawing almost too refined for landscape subjects, and only to be understood by reference to his engravings after Michael Angelo, they would have felt it to be unlikely that the work of such a man should be entirely undeserving of respect. On the other hand, the grounds of its praise were unfortunately chosen; for, though possessing many merits, it had no claim whatever to be ranked among productions of Creative art. It would perhaps be difficult to point to a work so exalted in feeling, and so deficient in invention. The sky had been strictly taken from nature, this was evident at a glance; and as a study of sky it was every way noble. To the purpose of the picture it hardly contributed; its sublimity was that of splendor, not of terror; and its darkness that of retreating, not of gathering, storm. The features of the landscape were devoid alike of variety and probability; the division of the scene by the central valley and winding river at

once theatrical and commonplace; and the foreground, on which the light was intense, alike devoid of dignity in arrangemen, and of interest in detail.

The falseness or deficiency of color in the works of Mr. Landseer has been remarked above. The writer has much pleasure in noticing a very beautiful exception in the picture of the "Random Shot," certainly the most successful rendering he has ever seen of the hue of snow under warm but subdued light. The subtlety of gradation from the portions of the wreath fully illumined, to those which, feebly tinged by the horizontal rays, swelled into a dome of dim purple, dark against the green evening sky; the truth of the blue shadows, with which this dome was barred, and the depth of delicate color out of which the lights upon the footprints were raised, deserved the most earnest and serious admiration; proving, at the same time, that the errors in color, so frequently to be regretted in the works of the painter, are the result rather of inattention than of feeble perception. A curious proof of this inattention occurs in the disposition of the shadows in the background of the "Old Cover Hack," No. 229. One of its points of light is on the rusty iron handle of a pump, in the shape of an S. The sun strikes the greater part of its length, illuminating the perpendicular portion of the curve; yet shadow is only cast on the wall behind by the returning portion of the lower extremity. A smile may be excited by the notice of so trivial a circumstance; but the simplicity of the error renders it the more remarkable, and the great masters of chiaroscuro are accurate in all such minor points; a vague sense of greater truth results from this correctness, even when it is not in particulars analyzed or noted by the observer. In the small but very valuable Paul Potter in Lord Westminster's collection, the body of one of the sheep under the hedge is for the most part in shadow, but the sunlight touches the extremity of the back. The sun is low, and the shadows feeble and distorted; yet that of the sunlighted fleece is cast exactly in its true place and proportion beyond that of the hedge. The spectator may not observe this; yet, unobserved, it is one of the circumstances which make him feel the picture to be full of sunshine.

As an example of perfect color, and of the most refined

handling ever perhaps exhibited in animal painting, the Butcher's Dog in the corner of Mr. Mulready's "Butt," No. 160, deserved a whole room of the Academy to himself. This, with the spaniel in the "Choosing the Wedding Gown," and the two dogs in the hayfield subject (Burchell and Sophia), displays perhaps the most wonderful, because the most dignified, finish in the expression of anatomy and covering—of muscle and hide at once, and assuredly the most perfect unity of drawing and color, which the entire range of ancient and modern art can exhibit. Albert Durer is indeed the only rival who might be suggested; and, though greater far in imagination, and equal in draughtsmanship, Albert Durer was less true and less delicate in hue. In sculpturesque arrangement both masters show the same degree of feeling: any of these dogs of Mulready might be taken out of the canvas and cut in alabaster, or, perhaps better, struck upon a coin. Every lock and line of the hair has been grouped as it is on a Greek die; and if this not always without some loss of ease and of action, yet this very loss is ennobling, in a period when all is generally sacrificed to the great coxcombry of art, the affectation of ease.

Yet Mr. Mulready himself is not always free from affectation of some kind; mannerism, at least, there is in his treatment of tree trunks. There is a ghastliness about his labored anatomies of them, as well as a want of specific character. Why need they be always flayed? The hide of a beech tree, or of a birch or fir, is nearly as fair a thing as an animal's; glossy as a dove's neck barred with black like a zebra, or glowing in purple grey and velvet brown like furry cattle in sunset. Why not paint these as Mr. Mulready paints other things, as they are? that simplest, that deepest of all secrets, which gives such majesty to the ragged leaves about the edges of the pond in the "Gravel-pit." (No. 125.), and imparts a strange interest to the grey ragged urchins disappearing behind the bank, that bank so low, so familiar, so sublime! What a contrast between the deep sentiment of that commonest of all common, homeliest of all homely, subjects, and the lost sentiment of Mr. Stanfield's "Amalfi" the chief landscape of the year, full of exalted material, and mighty crags, and massy seas, grottoes, precipices, and convents, fortress-towers and cloud-capped mountains, and all in

vain, merely because that same simple secret has been despised; because nothing there is painted as it is! The picture was a most singular example of the scenic assemblage of contradictory theme which is characteristic of Picturesque, as opposed to Poetical, composition. The lines chosen from Rogers for a titular legend were full of summer, glowing with golden light, and toned with quiet melancholy:

> "To him who sails
> Under the shore, a few white villages,
> Scattered above, below, some in the clouds,
> Some on the margin of the dark blue sea,
> And glittering thro' their lemon groves, announce
> The region of Amalfi. Then, half-fallen,
> A lonely watch-tower on the precipice,
> Their ancient landmark, comes—long may it last!
> And to the seaman, in a distant age,
> Though now he little thinks how large his debt,
> Serve for their monument."

Prepared by these lines for a dream upon deep, calm waters, under the shadow and scent of the close lemon leaves, the spectator found himself placed by the painter, wet through, in a noisy fishing boat, on a splashing sea, with just as much on his hands as he could manage to keep her gunwale from being stove in against a black rock; and with a heavy grey squall to windward. (This squall, by the by, was the very same which appeared in the picture of the Magra of 1847, and so were the snowy mountains above; only the squall at Amalfi entered on the left, and at the Magra on the right.) Now the scenery of Amalfi is impressive alike in storm or calm, and the writer has seen the Mediterranean as majestic and as southern-looking in its rage as in its rest. But it is treating both the green water and woods unfairly to destroy their peace without expressing their power; and withdraw from them their sadness and their sun, without the substitution of any effect more terrific than that of a squall at the Nore. The snow on the distant mountains chilled what it could not elevate, and was untrue to the scene besides; there is no snow on the Monte St. Angelo in summer except what is kept for the Neapolitan confectioners. The great merit of the picture was its rock-painting; too good

to have required the aid of the exaggeration of forms which satiated the eye throughout the composition.

Mr. F. R. Pickersgill's "Contest of Beauty" (No. 515.), and Mr. Uwins's "Vineyard Scene in the South of France," were, after Mr. Mulready's works, among the most interesting pieces of color in the Exhibition. The former, very rich and sweet in its harmonies, and especially happy in its contrasts of light and dark armor; nor less in the fancy of the little Love who, losing his hold of the orange boughs, was falling ignominiously without having time to open his wings. The latter was a curious example of what I have described as abstraction of color. Strictly true or possible it was not; a vintage is usually a dusty and dim-looking procedure; but there were poetry and feeling in Mr. Uwins's idealization of the sombre black of the veritable grape into a luscious ultra-marine purple, glowing among the green leaves like so much painted glass. The figures were bright and graceful in the extreme and most happily grouped. Little else that could be called color was to be seen upon the walls of the Exhibition, with the exception of the smaller works of Mr. Etty. Of these, the single head, "Morning Prayer," (No. 25.), and the "Still Life" (No. 73.), deserved, allowing for their peculiar aim, the highest praise. The larger subjects, more especially the St. John, were wanting in the merits peculiar to the painter; and in other respects it is alike painful and useless to allude to them. A very important and valuable work of Mr. Harding was placed, as usual, where its merits could be but ill seen, and where its chief fault, a feebleness of color in the principal light on the distant hills, was apparent. It was one of the very few views of the year which were transcripts, nearly without exaggeration, of the features of the localities.

Among the less conspicuous landscapes, Mr. W. E. Dighton's "Hay Meadow Corner" deserved especial notice; it was at once vigorous, fresh, faithful, and unpretending, the management of the distance most ingenious, and the painting of the foreground, with the single exception of Mr. Mulready's above noticed, unquestionably the best in the room. I have before had occasion to notice a picture by this artist, "A Hayfield in a Shower," exhibited in the British Institution in 1847, and this

year (1848) in the Scottish Academy, whose sky, in qualities of rainy, shattered, transparent grey, I have seldom seen equalled; nor the mist of its distance, expressive alike of previous heat and present beat of rain. I look with much interest for other works by this painter.

A hurried visit to Scotland in the spring of this year, while it enables the writer to acknowledge the ardor and genius manifested in very many of the works exhibited in the Scottish Academy, cannot be considered as furnishing him with sufficient grounds for specific criticism. He cannot, however, err in testifying his concurrence in the opinion expressed to him by several of the most distinguished members of that Academy, respecting the singular merit of the works of Mr. H. Drummond. A cabinet picture of "Banditti on the Watch," appeared to him one of the most masterly, unaffected, and sterling pieces of quiet painting he has ever seen from the hand of a living artist; and the other works of Mr. Drummond were alike remarkable for their manly and earnest finish, and their sweetness of feeling.

MODERN PAINTERS.

VOL. III.

Lake, Land, and Cloud.

(near Como.)

MODERN PAINTERS.

VOLUME III.,

CONTAINING

PART IV.,

Of Many Things.

By JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.,

AUTHOR OF "THE STONES OF VENICE," ETC., ETC.

. . . . . "Accuse me not
Of arrogance, ...
If, having walked with Nature,
And offered, far as frailty would allow,
My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
Whom I have served, that their Divinity
Revolts, offended at the ways of men.
Philosophers, who, though the human soul
Be of a thousand faculties composed,
And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
This soul, and the transcendent universe
No more than as a mirror that reflects
To proud Self-love her own intelligence."

WORDSWORTH.

NEW YORK:
JOHN WILEY & SONS,
No. 15 ASTOR PLACE.

1885.

TO

THE LANDSCAPE ARTISTS OF ENGLAND

This Work

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

BY THEIR SINCERE ADMIRER,

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

As this preface is nearly all about myself, no one need take the trouble of reading it, unless he happens to be desirous of knowing—what I, at least, am bound to state,—the circumstances which have caused the long delay of the work, as well as the alterations which will be noticed in its form.

The first and second volumes were written to check, as far as I could, the attacks upon Turner which prevented the public from honoring his genius, at the time when his power was greatest. The check was partially given, but too late; Turner was seized by painful illness not long after the second volume appeared; his works, towards the close of the year 1845, showed a conclusive failure of power; and I saw that nothing remained for me to write, but his epitaph.

The critics had done their proper and appointed work; they had embittered, more than those who did not know Turner intimately could have believed possible, the closing years of his life; and had blinded the world in general (as it appears ordained by Fate that the world always *shall* be blinded) to the presence of a great spirit among them, till the hour of its departure. With them, and their successful work, I had nothing more to do; the account of gain and loss, of gifts and gratitude, between Turner and his countrymen, was for ever closed. *He* could only be left to his quiet death at Chelsea,—the sun upon his face; *they* to dispose a length of funeral through Ludgate, and bury, with threefold honor, his body in St. Paul's, his pictures at Charing Cross, and his purposes in Chancery. But with respect to the illustration and preservation of those of his works which remained unburied, I felt that much might yet be done, if I could at all succeed in proving that these works had some nobleness in them, and were worth preservation. I pursued my task, therefore, as I had at first proposed, with this only difference in

method,—that instead of writing in continued haste, such as I had been forced into at first by the urgency of the occasion, I set myself to do the work as well as I could, and to collect materials for the complete examination of the canons of art received among us.

I have now given ten years of my life to the single purpose of enabling myself to judge rightly of art, and spent them in labor as earnest and continuous as men usually undertake to gain position, or accumulate fortune. It is true, that the public still call me an "amateur;" nor have I ever been able to persuade them that it was possible to work steadily and hard with any other motive than that of gaining bread, or to give up a fixed number of hours every day to the furtherance of an object unconnected with personal interests. I have, however, given up so much of life to this object; earnestly desiring to ascertain, and be able to teach, the truth respecting art; and also knowing that this truth was, by time and labor, definitely ascertainable.

It is an idea too frequently entertained, by persons who are not much interested in art, that there are no laws of right or wrong concerning it; and that the best art is that which pleases most widely. Hence the constant allegation of "dogmatism" against any one who states unhesitatingly either preference or principle, respecting pictures. There are, however, laws of truth and right in painting, just as fixed as those of harmony in music, or of affinity in chemistry. Those laws are perfectly ascertainable by labor, and ascertainable no other way. It is as ridiculous for any one to speak positively about painting who has not given a great part of his life to its study, as it would be for a person who had never studied chemistry to give a lecture on affinities of elements; but it is also as ridiculous for a person to speak hesitatingly about laws of painting who has conscientiously given his time to their ascertainment, as it would be for Mr. Faraday to announce in a dubious manner that iron had an affinity for oxygen, and to put the question to the vote of his audience whether it had or not. Of course there are many things, in all stages of knowledge, which cannot be dogmatically stated; and it will be found, by any candid reader, either of what I have before written, or of this book, that in many cases, I am *not* dogmatic. The phrase, "I think so," or, "it seems so to me," will be met with continually; and I pray the reader to believe that I use such expression always in seriousness, never as matter of form.

It may perhaps be thought that, considering the not very elaborate structure of the following volumes, they might have been finished sooner. But it will be found, on reflection, that the ranges of inquiry engaged in demanded, even for their slight investigation, time and pains which are quite unrepresented in the result. It often required a week or two's hard walking to determine some geological problem, now dismissed in an unnoticed sentence; and it constantly needed examination and thought, prolonged during many days in the picture gallery, to form opinions which the reader may suppose to be dictated by caprice, and will hear only to dispute.

A more serious disadvantage, resulting from the necessary breadth of subject, was the chance of making mistakes in minor and accessory points. For the labor of a critic who sincerely desires to be just, extends into more fields than it is possible for any single hand to furrow straightly. He has to take *some* note of many physical sciences; of optics, geometry, geology, botany, and anatomy; he must acquaint himself with the works of all great artists, and with the temper and history of the times in which they lived; he must be a fair metaphysician, and a careful observer of the phenomena of natural scenery. It is not possible to extend the range of work thus widely, without running the chance of occasionally making mistakes; and if I carefully guarded against that chance, I should be compelled both to shorten my powers of usefulness in many directions, and to lose much time over what work I undertook. All that I can secure, therefore, is rightness in main points and main tendencies; for it is perfectly possible to protect oneself against small errors, and yet to make great and final error in the sum of work: on the other hand, it is equally possible to fall into many small errors, and yet be right in tendency all the while, and entirely right in the end. In this respect, some men may be compared to careful travellers, who neither stumble at stones, nor slip in sloughs, but have, from the beginning of their journey to its close, chosen the wrong road; and others to those who, however slipping or stumbling at the wayside, have yet their eyes fixed on the true gate and goal (stumbling, perhaps, even the more because they have), and will not fail of reaching them. Such are assuredly the safer guides: he who follows them may avoid their slips, and be their companion in attainment.

Although, therefore, it is not possible but that, in the discussion of so many subjects as are necessarily introduced in the

following pages, here and there a chance should arise of minor mistake or misconception, the reader need not be disturbed by the detection of any such. He will find always that they do not affect the matter mainly in hand.

I refer especially in these remarks to the chapters on Classical and Mediæval Landscape. It is certain, that in many respects, the views there stated must be inaccurate or incomplete; for how should it be otherwise when the subject is one whose proper discussion would require knowledge of the entire history of two great ages of the world? But I am well assured that the suggestions in those chapters are useful; and that even if, after farther study of the subject, the reader should find cause to differ with me in this or the other speciality, he will yet thank me for helping him to a certain length in the investigation, and confess, perhaps, that he could not at last have been right, if I had not first ventured to be wrong.

And of one thing he may be certified, that any error I fall into will not be in an illogical deduction: I may mistake the meaning of a symbol, or the angle of a rock-cleavage, but not draw an inconsequent conclusion. I state this, because it has often been said that I am not logical, by persons who do not so much as know what logic means. Next to imagination, the power of perceiving logical relation is one of the rarest among men; certainly, of those with whom I have conversed, I have found always ten who had deep feeling, quick wit, or extended knowledge, for one who could set down a syllogism without a flaw; and for ten who could set down a syllogism, only one who could *entirely* understand that a square has four sides. Even as I am sending these sheets to press, a work is put into my hand, written to prove (I would, from the depth of my heart, it could prove) that there was no ground for what I said in the Stones of Venice respecting the logical probability of the continuity of evil. It seems learned, temperate, thoughtful, everything in feeling and aim that a book should be, and yet it begins with this sentence:

"The question cited in our preface, 'Why not infinite good out of infinite evil?' must be taken to imply—for it else can have no weight,—that in order to the production of infinite good, the existence of infinite evil is indispensable."

So, if I had said that there was no reason why honey should not be sucked out of a rock, and oil out of a flinty rock, the writer

would have told me this sentence must be taken to imply—for it else could have no weight,—that in order to the production of honey, the existence of rocks is indispensable. No less intense and marvellous are the logical errors into which our best writers are continually falling, owing to the notion that laws of logic will help them better than common sense. Whereas any man who can reason at all, does it instinctively, and takes leaps over intermediate syllogisms by the score, yet never misses his footing at the end of the leap; but he who cannot instinctively argue, might as well, with the gout in both feet, try to follow a chamois hunter by the help of crutches, as to follow, by the help of syllogism, a person who has the right use of his reason. I should not, however, have thought it necessary to allude to this common charge against my writings, but that it happens to confirm some views I have long entertained, and which the reader will find glanced at in their proper place, respecting the necessity of a more *practically* logical education for our youth. Of other various charges I need take no note, because they are always answered the one by the other. The complaint made against me to-day for being narrow and exclusive, is met to-morrow by indignation that I should admire schools whose characters cannot be reconciled; and the assertion of one critic, that I am always contradicting myself, is balanced by the vexation of another, at my ten years' obstinacies in error.

I once intended the illustrations to these volumes to be more numerous and elaborate, but the art of photography now enables any reader to obtain as many memoranda of the facts of nature as he needs; and, in the course of my ten years' pause, I have formed plans for the representation of some of the works of Turner on their own scale; so that it would have been quite useless to spend time in reducing drawings to the size of this page, which were afterwards to be engraved of their own size.* I have therefore here only given illustrations enough to enable the reader, who has not access to the works of Turner, to understand the principles laid down in the text, and apply them to such art as may be within his reach. And I owe sincere thanks to the various engravers who have worked with me, for the zeal and care with which they have carried out the requirements in each case, and overcome difficulties of a nature often widely

* I should be very grateful to the proprietors of pictures or drawings by Turner, if they would send me lists of the works in their possession; as I am desirous of forming a systematic catalogue of all his works.

differing from those involved by their habitual practice. I would not make invidious distinction, where all have done well; but may perhaps be permitted to point, as examples of what I mean, to the 3rd and 6th Plates in this volume (the 6th being left unlettered in order not to injure the effect of its ground), in which Mr. Le Keux and Mr. Armytage have exactly facsimiled, in line engraving, drawings of mine made on a grey ground touched with white, and have given even the *loaded* look of the body color. The power of thus imitating actual touches of color with pure lines will be, I believe, of great future importance in rendering Turner's work on a large scale. As for the merit or demerit of these or other drawings of my own, which I am obliged now for the sake of illustration often to engrave, I believe I could speak of it impartially, and should unreluctantly do so; but I leave, as most readers will think I ought, such judgment to them, merely begging them to remember that there are two general principles to be kept in mind in examining the drawings of any writer on art: the first, that they ought at least to show such ordinary skill in draughtsmanship, as to prove that the writer knows *what* the good qualities of drawing *are;* the second, that they are never to be expected to equal, in either execution or conception, the work of accomplished artists,—for the simple reason, that in order to do *any*thing thoroughly well, the whole mind, and the whole available time, must be given to that single art. It is probable, for reasons which will be noted in the following pages, that the critical and executive faculties are in great part independent of each other; so that it is nearly as great an absurdity to require of any critic that he should equal in execution even the work which he condemns, as to require of the audience which hisses a piece of vocal music that they should instantly chant it in truer harmony themselves. But whether this be true or not (it is at least untrue to this extent, that a certain power of drawing is *indispensable* to the critic of art), and supposing that the executive and critical powers always exist in some correspondent degree in the same person, still they cannot be cultivated to the same extent. The attention required for the development of a theory is necessarily withdrawn from the design of a drawing, and the time devoted to the realization of a form is lost to the solution of a problem. Choice *must* at last be made between one and the other power, as the principal aim of life; and if the painter should find it necessary sometimes to explain one of his pictures

in words, or the writer to illustrate his meaning with a drawing, the skill of the one need not be doubted because his logic is feeble, nor the sense of the other because his pencil is listless.

As, however, it is sometimes alleged by the opponents of my principles, that I have never *done anything*, it is proper that the reader should know exactly the amount of work for which I am answerable in these illustrations. When an example is given from any of the works of Turner, it is either etched by myself from the original drawing, or engraved from a drawing of mine, translating Turner's work out of color into black and white, as for instance, the frontispiece to the fourth volume. When a plate is inscribed as "*after*" such and such a master, I have always myself made the drawing, in black and white, from the original picture; as, for instance, Plate 11, in this volume. If it has been made from a previously existing engraving, it is inscribed with the name of the first engraver at the left-hand lowest corner; as, for instance, Plate 18, in Vol. IV. Outline etchings are either by my own hand on the steel, as Plate 12, here, and 20, 21, in Vol. IV.; or copies from my pen drawings, etched by Mr. Boys, with a fidelity for which I sincerely thank him; one, Plate 22, Vol. IV., is both drawn and etched by Mr. Boys from an old engraving. Most of the other illustrations are engraved from my own studies from nature. The colored Plate (7, in this volume) is from a drawing executed with great skill by my assistant, Mr. J. J. Laing, from MSS. in the British Museum; and the lithography of it has been kindly superintended by Mr. Henry Shaw, whose renderings of mediæval ornaments stand, as far as I know, quite unrivalled in modern art. The two woodcuts of mediæval design, Figs. 1 and 3, are also from drawings by Mr. Laing, admirably cut by Miss Byfield. I use this word "admirably," not with reference to mere delicacy of execution, which can usually be had for money, but to the perfect fidelity of facsimile, which is in general *not* to be had for money, and by which Miss Byfield has saved me all trouble with respect to the numerous woodcuts in the fourth volume; first, by her excellent renderings of various portions of Albert Durer's woodcuts; and, secondly, by reproducing, to their last dot or scratch, my own pen diagrams, drawn in general so roughly that few wood-engravers would have condescended to cut them with care, and yet always involving some points in which care was indispensable. One or two changes have been permitted in the arrangement of the book,

which make the text in these volumes not altogether a symmetrical continuation of that in former ones. Thus, I thought it better to put the numbers of paragraphs always at the left-hand side of the page; and as the summaries, in small type, appeared to me for the most part cumbrous and useless, I have banished them, except where there were complicated divisions of subject which it seemed convenient to indicate at the margin. I am not sorry thus to carry out my own principle of the sacrifice of architectural or constructive symmetry to practical service. The plates are, in a somewhat unusual way, numbered consecutively through the two volumes, as I intend them to be also through the fifth. This plan saves much trouble in references.

I have only to express, in conclusion, my regret that it has been impossible to finish the work within the limits first proposed. Having, of late, found my designs always requiring enlargement in process of execution, I will take care, in future, to set no limits whatsoever to any good intentions. In the present instance I trust the reader will pardon me, as the later efforts of our schools of art have necessarily introduced many new topics of discussion.

And so I wish him heartily a happy New Year.

Denmark Hill, Jan. 1856.

MODERN PAINTERS.

PART IV.

OF MANY THINGS.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE RECEIVED OPINIONS TOUCHING THE "GRAND STYLE."

§ 1. In taking up the clue of an inquiry, now intermitted for nearly ten years, it may be well to do as a traveller would, who had to recommence an interrupted journey in a guideless country; and, ascending, as it were, some little hill beside our road, note how far we have already advanced, and what pleasantest ways we may choose for farther progress.

I endeavored, in the beginning of the first volume, to divide the sources of pleasure open to us in Art into certain groups, which might conveniently be studied in succession. After some preliminary discussion, it was concluded (Part I. Chap. III. § 86), that these groups were, in the main, three; consisting, first, of the pleasures taken in perceiving simple resemblance to Nature (Ideas of Truth); secondly, of the pleasures taken in the beauty of the things chosen to be painted (Ideas of Beauty); and, lastly, of pleasures taken in the meanings and relations of these things (Ideas of Relation).

The first volume, treating of the ideas of Truth, was chiefly occupied with an inquiry into the various success with which different artists had represented the facts of Nature,—an inquiry necessarily conducted very imperfectly, owing to the want of pictorial illustration.

The second volume nearly opened the inquiry into the nature of ideas of Beauty and Relation, by analysing (as far as I was able to do so) the two faculties of the human mind which mainly seized such ideas; namely, the contemplative and imaginative faculties.

It remains for us to examine the various success of artists, especially of the great landscape-painter whose works have been throughout our principal subject, in addressing these faculties of the human mind, and to consider who among them has conveyed the noblest ideas of beauty, and touched the deepest sources of thought.

§ 2. I do not intend, however, now to pursue the inquiry in a method so laboriously systematic; for the subject may, it seems to me, be more usefully treated by pursuing the different questions which rise out of it just as they occur to us, without too great scrupulousness in marking connections, or insisting on sequences. Much time is wasted by human beings, in general, on establishment of systems; and it often takes more labor to master the intricacies of an artificial connection, than to remember the separate facts which are so carefully connected. I suspect that system-makers, in general, are not of much more use, each in his own domain, than, in that of Pomona, the old women who tie cherries upon sticks, for the more convenient portableness of the same. To cultivate well, and choose well, your cherries, is of some importance; but if they can be had in their own wild way of clustering about their crabbed stalk, it is a better connection for them than any other; and, if they cannot, then, so that they be not bruised, it makes to a boy of a practical disposition, not much difference whether he gets them by handfuls, or in beaded symmetry on the exalting stick. I purpose, therefore, henceforward to trouble myself little with sticks or twine, but to arrange my chapters with a view to convenient reference, rather than to any careful division of subjects, and to follow out, in any by-ways that may open, on right hand or left, whatever question it seems useful at any moment to settle.

§ 3. And, in the outset, I find myself met by one which I ought to have touched upon before—one of especial interest in the present state of the Arts. I have said that the art is great-

est which includes the greatest ideas; but I have not endeavored to define the nature of this greatness in the ideas themselves. We speak of great truths, of great beauties, great thoughts. What is it which makes one truth greater than another, one thought greater than another? This question is, I repeat, of peculiar importance at the present time; for, during a period now of some hundred and fifty years, all writers on Art who have pretended to eminence, have insisted much on a supposed distinction between what they call the Great and the Low Schools; using the terms "High Art," "Great or Ideal Style," and other such, as descriptive of a certain noble manner of painting, which it was desirable that all students of Art should be early led to reverence and adopt; and characterising as "vulgar," or "low," or "realist," another manner of painting and conceiving, which it was equally necessary that all students should be taught to avoid.

But lately this established teaching, never very intelligible, has been gravely called in question. The advocates and self-supposed practisers of "High Art" are beginning to be looked upon with doubt, and their peculiar phraseology to be treated with even a certain degree of ridicule. And other forms of Art are partly developed among us, which do not pretend to be high, but rather to be strong, healthy, and humble. This matter of "highness" in Art, therefore deserves our most careful consideration. Has it been, or is it, a true highness, a true princeliness, or only a show of it, consisting in courtly manners and robes of state? Is it rocky height or cloudy height, adamant or vapor, on which the sun of praise so long has risen and set? It will be well at once to consider this.

§ 4. And first, let us get, as quickly as may be, at the exact meaning with which the advocates of "High Art" use that somewhat obscure and figurative term.

I do not know that the principles in question are anywhere more distinctly expressed than in two papers in the Idler, written by Sir Joshua Reynolds, of course under the immediate sanction of Johnson; and which may thus be considered as the utterance of the views then held upon the subject by the artists of chief skill, and critics of most sense, arranged in a form so brief and clear, as to admit of their being brought before the

public for a morning's entertainment. I cannot, therefore, it seems to me, do better than quote these two letters, or at least the important parts of them, examining the exact meaning of each passage as it occurs. There are, in all, in the Idler three letters on painting, Nos. 76, 79, and 82; of these, the first is directed only against the impertinences of pretended connoisseurs, and is as notable for its faithfulness, as for its wit, in the description of the several modes of criticism in an artificial and ignorant state of society; it is only, therefore, in the two last papers that we find the expression of the doctrines which it is our business to examine.

No. 79 (Saturday, Oct. 20th, 1759) begins, after a short preamble, with the following passage:—

"Amongst the painters, and the writers on painting, there is one maxim universally admitted and continually inculcated. Imitate nature is the invariable rule; but I know none who have explained in what manner this rule is to be understood; the sequence of which is, that every one takes it in the most obvious sense, that objects are represented naturally when they have such relief that they seem real. It may appear strange, perhaps, to hear this sense of the rule disputed; but it must be considered, that, if the excellency of a painter consisted only in this kind of imitation, Painting must lose its rank, and be no longer considered as a liberal art, and sister to Poetry, this imitation being nearly mechanical, in which the slowest intellect is always sure to succeed best; for the painter of genius cannot stoop to drudgery, in which the understanding has no part; and what pretence has the art to claim kindred with poetry but by its power over the imagination? To this power the painter of genius directs him; in this sense he studies nature, and often arrives at his end, even by being unnatural in the confined sense of the word."

"The grand style of painting requires this minute attention to be carefully avoided, and must be kept as separate from it as the style of poetry from that of history. (Poetical ornaments destroy that air of truth and plainness which ought to characterise history; but the very being of poetry consists in departing from this plain narrative, and adopting every ornament that will warm the imagination.*) To desire to see the excellencies of each style united—to mingle the Dutch with the Italian school, is to join contrarieties, which cannot subsist together, and which destroy the efficacy of each other."

* I have put this sentence in a parenthesis, because it is inconsistent with the rest of the statement, and with the general teaching of the paper; since that which "attends only to the invariable" cannot certainly adopt "every ornament that will warm the imagination."

§ 5. We find, first, from this interesting passage, that the writer considers the Dutch and Italian masters as severally representative of the low and high schools; next, that he considers the Dutch painters as excelling in a mechanical imitation, "in which the slowest intellect is always sure to succeed best;" and, thirdly, that he considers the Italian painters as excelling in a style which corresponds to that of imaginative poetry in literature, and which has an exclusive right to be called the grand style.

I wish that it were in my power entirely to concur with the writer, and to enforce this opinion thus distinctly stated. I have never been a zealous partisan of the Dutch School, and should rejoice in claiming Reynolds's authority for the assertion, that their manner was one "in which the slowest intellect was always sure to succeed best." But before his authority can be so claimed, we must observe exactly the meaning of the assertion itself, and separate it from the company of some others not perhaps so admissible. First, I say, we must observe Reynolds's exact meaning, for (though the assertion may at first appear singular) a man who uses accurate language is always more liable to misinterpretation than one who is careless in his expressions. We may assume that the latter means very nearly what we at first suppose him to mean, for words which have been uttered without thought may be received without examination. But when a writer or speaker may be fairly supposed to have considered his expressions carefully, and, after having revolved a number of terms in his mind, to have chosen the one which *exactly* means the thing he intends to say, we may be assured that what costs him time to select, will require from us time to understand, and that we shall do him wrong, unless we pause to reflect how the word which he has actually employed differs from other words which it seems he *might* have employed. It thus constantly happens that persons themselves unaccustomed to think clearly, or speak correctly, misunderstand a logical and careful writer, and are actually in more danger of being misled by language which is measured and precise, than by that which is loose and inaccurate.

§ 6. Now, in the instance before us, a person not accustomed to good writing might very rashly conclude, that when Reynolds

spoke of the Dutch School as one "in which the slowest intellect was sure to succeed best," he meant to say that every successful Dutch painter was a fool. We have no right to take his assertion in that sense. He says, the *slowest* intellect. We have no right to assume that he meant the *weakest*. For it is true, that in order to succeed in the Dutch style, a man has need of qualities of mind eminently deliberate and sustained. He must be possessed of patience rather than of power; and must feel no weariness in contemplating the expression of a single thought for several months together. As opposed to the changeful energies of the imagination, these mental characters may be properly spoken of as under the general term—slowness of intellect. But it by no means follows that they are necessarily those of weak or foolish men.

We observe however, farther, that the imitation which Reynolds supposes to be characteristic of the Dutch School is that which gives to objects such relief that they seem real, and that he then speaks of this art of realistic imitation as corresponding to *history* in literature.

§ 7. Reynolds, therefore, seems to class these dull works of the Dutch School under a general head, to which they are not commonly referred—that of *Historical* painting; while he speaks of the works of the Italian School not as historical, but as *poetical* painting. His next sentence will farther manifest his meaning.

"The Italian attends only to the invariable, the great and general ideas which are fixed and inherent in universal nature; the Dutch, on the contrary, to literal truth and minute exactness in the detail, as I may say, of nature modified by accident. The attention to these petty peculiarities is the very cause of this naturalness so much admired in the Dutch pictures, which, if we suppose it to be a beauty, is certainly of a lower order, which ought to give place to a beauty of a superior kind, since one cannot be obtained but by departing from the other.

"If my opinion was asked concerning the works of Michael Angelo, whether they would receive any advantage from possessing this mechanical merit, I should not scruple to say, they would not only receive no advantage, but would lose, in a great measure, the effect which they now have on every mind susceptible of great and noble ideas. His works may be said to be all genius and soul; and why should they be loaded with heavy matter, which can only counteract his purpose by retarding the progress of the imagination?"

Examining carefully this and the preceding passage, we find the author's unmistakable meaning to be, that Dutch painting is *history;* attending to literal truth and "minute exactness in the details of nature modified by accident." That Italian painting is *poetry*, attending only to the invariable; and that works which attend only to the invariable are full of genius and soul; but that literal truth and exact detail are "heavy matter which retards the progress of the imagination."

§ 8. This being then indisputably what Reynolds means to tell us, let us think a little whether he is in all respects right. And first, as he compares his two kinds of painting to history and poetry, let us see how poetry and history themselves differ, in their use of *variable* and *invariable* details. I am writing at a window which commands a view of the head of the Lake of Geneva; and as I look up from my paper, to consider this point, I see, beyond it, a blue breadth of softly moving water, and the outline of the mountains above Chillon, bathed in morning mist. The first verses which naturally come into my mind are—

> "A thousand feet in depth below
> The massy waters meet and flow;
> So far the fathom line was sent
> From Chillon's snow-white battlement."

Let us see in what manner this poetical statement is distinguished from a historical one.

It is distinguished from a truly historical statement, first, in being simply false. The water under the castle of Chillon is not a thousand feet deep, nor anything like it.* Herein, certainly, these lines fulfil Reynolds's first requirement in poetry, "that it should be inattentive to literal truth and minute exactness in detail." In order, however, to make our comparison more closely in other points, let us assume that what is stated is indeed a fact, and that it was to be recorded, first historically, and then poetically.

Historically stating it, then, we should say: "The lake was

* "MM. Mallet et Pictet, se trouvant sur le lac auprès du château de Chillon, le 6 Août, 1774, plongèrent à la profondeur de 312 pieds de un thermomètre," &c.—SAUSSURE, *Voyages dans les Alpes*, chap. ii. § 33. It appears from the next paragraph, that the thermometer was "au fond du lac."

sounded from the walls of the castle of Chillon, and found to be a thousand feet deep."

Now, if Reynolds be right in his idea of the difference between history and poetry, we shall find that Byron leaves out of this statement certain *un*necessary details, and retains only the invariable,—that is to say, the points which the Lake of Geneva and castle of Chillon have in common with all other lakes and castles.

Let us hear, therefore.

"A thousand feet in depth below."

"Below?" Here is, at all events, a word added (instead of anything being taken away); invariable, certainly in the case of lakes, but not absolutely necessary.

"The massy waters meet and flow."

"Massy!" why massy? Because deep water is heavy. The word is a good word, but it is assuredly an added detail, and expresses a character, not which the Lake of Geneva has in common with all other lakes, but which it has in distinction from those which are narrow or shallow.

§ 9. "Meet and flow." Why meet and flow? Partly to make up a rhyme; partly to tell us that the waters are forceful as well as massy, and changeful as well as deep. Observe, a farther addition of details, and of details more or less peculiar to the spot, or, according to Reynolds's definition, of "heavy matter, retarding the progress of the imagination."

"So far the fathom line was sent."

Why fathom line? All lines for sounding are not fathom lines. If the lake was ever sounded from Chillon, it was probably sounded in metres, not fathoms. This is an addition of another particular detail, in which the only compliance with Reynolds's requirement is, that there is some chance of its being an inaccurate one.

"From Chillon's snow-white battlement."

Why snow-white? Because castle battlements are not usually snow-white. This is another added detail, and a detail

quite peculiar to Chillon, and therefore exactly the most striking word in the whole passage.

"Battlement!" why battlement? Because all walls have not battlements, and the addition of the term marks the castle to be not merely a prison, but a fortress.

This is a curious result. Instead of finding, as we expected, the poetry distinguished from the history by the omission of details, we find it consist entirely in the *addition* of details; and instead of being characterized by regard only of the invariable, we find its whole power to consist in the clear expression of what is singular and particular!

§ 10. The reader may pursue the investigation for himself in other instances. He will find in every case that a poetical is distinguished from a merely historical statement, not by being more vague, but more specific, and it might, therefore, at first appear that our author's comparison should be simply reversed, and that the Dutch School should be called poetical, and the Italian historical. But the term poetical does not appear very applicable to the generality of Dutch painting; and a little reflection will show us, that if the Italians represent only the invariable, they cannot be properly compared even to historians. For that which is incapable of change has no history, and records which state only the invariable need not be written, and could not be read.

§ 11. It is evident, therefore, that our author has entangled himself in some grave fallacy, by introducing this idea of invariableness as forming a distinction between poetical and historical art. What the fallacy is, we shall discover as we proceed; but as an invading army should not leave an untaken fortress in its rear, we must not go on with our inquiry into the views of Reynolds until we have settled satisfactorily the question already suggested to us, in what the essence of poetical treatment really consists. For though, as we have seen, it certainly involves the addition of specific details, it cannot be simply that addition which turns the history into poetry. For it is perfectly possible to add any number of details to a historical statement, and to make it more prosaic with every added word. As, for instance, "The lake was sounded out of a flat-bottomed boat, near the crab tree at the corner of the kitchen-garden,

and was found to be a thousand feet nine inches deep, with a muddy bottom." It thus appears that it is not the multiplication of details which constitutes poetry; nor their subtraction which constitutes history; but that there must be something either in the nature of the details themselves, or the method of using them, which invests them with poetical power or historical propriety.

§ 12. It seems to me, and may seem to the reader, strange that we should need to ask the question, "What is poetry?" Here is a word we have been using all our lives, and, I suppose, with a very distinct idea attached to it; and when I am now called upon to give a definition of this idea, I find myself at a pause. What is more singular, I do not at present recollect hearing the question often asked, though surely it is a very natural one; and I never recollect hearing it answered, or even attempted to be answered. In general, people shelter themselves under metaphors, and while we hear poetry described as an utterance of the soul, an effusion of Divinity, or voice of nature, or in other terms equally elevated and obscure, we never attain anything like a definite explanation of the character which actually distinguishes it from prose.

§ 13. I come, after some embarrassment, to the conclusion, that poetry is "the suggestion, by the imagination, of noble grounds for the noble emotions." I mean, by the noble emotions, those four principal sacred passions—Love, Veneration, Admiration, and Joy (this latter especially, if unselfish); and their opposites—Hatred, Indignation (or Scorn), Horror, and Grief,—this last, when unselfish, becoming Compassion. These passions in their various combinations constitute what is called "poetical feeling," when they are felt on noble grounds, that is, on great and true grounds. Indignation, for instance, is a poetical feeling, if excited by serious injury; but it is not a poetical feeling if entertained on being cheated out of a small sum of money. It is very possible the manner of the cheat may have been such as to justify considerable indignation; but the feeling is nevertheless not poetical unless the grounds of it be large as well as just. In like manner, energetic admiration may be excited in certain minds by a display of fireworks, or a street of handsome shops; but the feeling is not poetical, be-

cause the grounds of it are false, and therefore ignoble. There is in reality nothing to deserve admiration either in the firing of packets of gunpowder, or in the display of the stocks of warehouses. But admiration excited by the budding of a flower is a poetical feeling, because it is impossible that this manifestation of spiritual power and vital beauty can ever be enough admired.

§ 14. Farther, it is necessary to the existence of poetry that the grounds of these feelings should be *furnished by the imagination*. Poetical feeling, that is to say, mere noble emotion, is not poetry. It is happily inherent in all human nature deserving the name, and is found often to be purest in the least sophisticated. But the power of assembling, by *the help of the imagination*, such images as will excite these feelings, is the power of the poet or literally of the "Maker." *

* Take, for instance, the beautiful stanza in the "Affliction of Margaret:"

"I look for ghosts, but none will force
Their way to me. 'Tis falsely said
That ever there was intercourse
Between the living and the dead;
For, surely then, I should have sight
Of him I wait for, day and night,
With love and longing infinite."

This we call Poetry, because it is invented *or made* by the writer, entering into the mind of a supposed person. Next, take an instance of the actual feeling truly experienced and simply expressed by a real person.

"Nothing surprised me more than a woman of Argentière, whose cottage I went into to ask for milk, as I came down from the glacier of Argentière, in the month of March, 1764. An epidemic dysentery had prevailed in the village, and, a few months before, had taken away from her, her father, her husband, and her brothers, so that she was left alone, with three children in the cradle. Her face had something noble in it, and its expression bore the seal of a calm and profound sorrow. After having given me milk, she asked me whence I came, and what I came there to do, so early in the year. When she knew that I was of Geneva, she said to me, 'she could not believe that all Protestants were lost souls; that there were many honest people among us, and that God was too good and too great to condemn all without distinction.' Then, after a moment of reflection, she added, in shaking her head, 'But, that which is very strange, is that of so many who have gone away, none have ever returned. I,' she added, with an expression of grief, 'who have so mourned my husband and my brothers, who have never ceased to think of them, who every night conjure them with

Now this power of exciting the emotions depends of course on the richness of the imagination, and on its choice of those images which, in combination, will be most effective, or, for the particular work to be done, most fit. And it is altogether impossible for a writer not endowed with invention to conceive what tools a true poet will make use of, or in what way he will apply them, or what unexpected results he will bring out by them; so that it is vain to say that the details of poetry ought to possess, or ever do possess, any *definite* character. Generally speaking, poetry runs into finer and more delicate details than prose; but the details are not poetical because they are more delicate, but because they are employed so as to bring out an affecting result. For instance, no one but a true poet would have thought of exciting our pity for a bereaved father by describing his way of locking the door of his house:

> "Perhaps to himself, at that moment he said,
> The key I must take, for my Ellen is dead;
> But of this in my ears not a word did he speak,
> And he went to the chase with a tear on his cheek."

In like manner, in painting, it is altogether impossible to say beforehand what details a great painter may make poetical by his use of them to excite noble emotions: and we shall, therefore, find presently that a painting is to be classed in the great or inferior schools, not according to the kind of details which it represents, but according to the uses for which it employs them.

§ 15. It is only farther to be noticed, that infinite confusion has been introduced into this subject by the careless and illogical custom of opposing painting to poetry, instead of regarding poetry as consisting in a noble use, whether of colors or words. Painting is properly to be opposed to *speaking* or *writing*, but not to *poetry*. Both painting and speaking are methods of

beseechings to tell me where they are, and in what state they are! Ah, surely, if they lived anywhere, they would not leave me thus! But, perhaps,' she added, 'I am not worthy of this kindness, perhaps the pure and innocent spirits of these children,' and she looked at the cradle, 'may have their presence, and the joy which is denied to *me*.'"—SAUSSURE, *Voyages dans les Alpes*, chap. xxiv.

This we do not call Poetry, merely because it is not invented, but the true utterance of a real person.

expression. Poetry is the employment of either for the noblest purposes.

§ 16. This question being thus far determined, we may proceed with our paper in the Idler.

"It is very difficult to determine the exact degree of enthusiasm that the arts of painting and poetry may admit. There may, perhaps, be too great indulgence as well as too great a restraint of imagination; if the one produces incoherent monsters, the other produces what is full as bad, lifeless insipidity. An intimate knowledge of the passions, and good sense, but not common sense, must at last determine its limits. It has been thought, and I believe with reason, that Michael Angelo sometimes transgressed those limits; and, I think, I have seen figures of him of which it was very difficult to determine whether they were in the highest degree sublime or extremely ridiculous. Such faults may be said to be the ebullitions of genius; but at least he had this merit, that he never was insipid, and whatever passion his works may excite, they will always escape contempt.

"What I have had under consideration is the sublimest style, particularly that of Michael Angelo, the Homer of painting. Other kinds may admit of this naturalness, which of the lowest kind is the chief merit; but in painting, as in poetry, the highest style has the least of common nature."

From this passage we gather three important indications of the supposed nature of the Great Style. That it is the work of men in a state of enthusiasm. That it is like the writing of Homer; and that it has as little as possible of "common nature" in it.

§ 17. First, it is produced by men in a state of enthusiasm. That is, by men who feel *strongly* and *nobly;* for we do not call a strong feeling of envy, jealousy, or ambition, enthusiasm. That is, therefore, by men who feel poetically. This much we may admit, I think, with perfect safety. Great art is produced by men who feel acutely and nobly; and it is in some sort an expression of this personal feeling. We can easily conceive that there may be a sufficiently marked distinction between such art, and that which is produced by men who do not feel at all, but who reproduce, though ever so accurately, yet coldly, like human mirrors, the scenes which pass before their eyes.

§ 18. Secondly, Great Art is like the writing of Homer, and this chiefly because it has little of "common nature" in it. We are not clearly informed what is meant by common nature in this passage. Homer seems to describe a great deal of what is

common ;—cookery, for instance, very carefully in all its processes. I suppose the passage in the Iliad which, on the whole, has excited most admiration, is that which describes a wife's sorrow at parting from her husband, and a child's fright at its father's helmet ; and I hope, at least, the former feeling may be considered "common nature." But the true greatness of Homer's style is, doubtless, held by our author to consist in his imaginations of things not only uncommon but impossible (such as spirits in brazen armor, or monsters with heads of men and bodies of beasts), and in his occasional delineations of the human character and form in their utmost, or heroic, strength and beauty. We gather then on the whole, that a painter in the Great Style must be enthusiastic, or full of emotion, and must paint the human form in its utmost strength and beauty, and perhaps certain impossible forms besides, liable by persons not in an equally enthusiastic state of mind to be looked upon as in some degree absurd. This I presume to be Reynolds's meaning, and to be all that he intends us to gather from his comparison of the Great Style with the writings of Homer. But if that comparison be a just one in all respects, surely two other corollaries ought to be drawn from it, namely,—first, that these Heroic or Impossible images are to be mingled with others very unheroic and very possible ; and, secondly, that in the representation of the Heroic or Impossible forms, the greatest care must be taken in *finishing the details*, so that a painter must not be satisfied with painting well the countenance and the body of his hero, but ought to spend the greatest part of his time (as Homer the greatest number of verses) in elaborating the sculptured pattern on his shield.

§ 19. Let us, however, proceed with our paper.

"One may very safely recommend a little more enthusiasm to the modern painters ; too much is certainly not the vice of the present age. The Italians seem to have been continually declining in this respect, from the time of Michael Angelo to that of Carlo Maratti, and from thence to the very bathos of insipidity to which they are now sunk, so that there is no need of remarking, that where I mentioned the Italian painters in opposition to the Dutch, I mean not the moderns, but the heads of the old Roman and Bolognian schools ; nor did I mean to include, in my idea of an Italian painter, the Venetian school, *which may be said to be the Dutch part of the Italian genius.* I have only to add a word of advice to the painters, that, however

excellent they may be in painting naturally, they would not flatter themselves very much upon it; and to the connoisseurs, that when they see a cat or a fiddle painted so finely, that, as the phrase is, it looks as if you could take it up, they would not for that reason immediately compare the painter to Raffaelle and Michael Angelo."

In this passage there are four points chiefly to be remarked. The first, that in the year 1759, the Italian painters were, in our author's opinion, sunk in the very bathos of insipidity. The second, that the Venetian painters, i. e. Titian, Tintoret, and Veronese, are, in our author's opinion, to be classed with the Dutch; that is to say, are painters in a style "in which the slowest intellect is always sure to succeed best." Thirdly, that painting naturally is not a difficult thing, nor one on which a painter should pride himself. And, finally, that connoisseurs, seeing a cat or a fiddle successfully painted, ought not therefore immediately to compare the painter to Raphael or Michael Angelo.

Yet Raphael painted fiddles very carefully in the foreground of his St. Cecilia,—so carefully, that they quite look as if they might be taken up. So carefully, that I never yet looked at the picture without wishing that somebody *would* take them up, and out of the way. And I am under a very strong persuasion that Raphael did not think painting "naturally" an easy thing. It will be well to examine into this point a little; and for the present, with the reader's permission, we will pass over the first two statements in this passage (touching the character of Italian art in 1759, and of Venetian art in general), and immediately examine some of the evidence existing as to the real dignity of "natural" painting—that is to say, of painting carried to the point at which it reaches a deceptive appearance of reality.

CHAPTER II.

OF REALIZATION.

§ 1. In the outset of this inquiry, the reader must thoroughly understand that we are not now considering *what* is to be painted, but *how far* it is to be painted. Not whether Raphael does right in representing angels playing upon violins, or whether Veronese does right in allowing cats and monkeys to join the company of kings: but whether, supposing the subjects rightly chosen, they ought on the canvas to look like real angels with real violins, and substantial cats looking at veritable kings; or only like imaginary angels with soundless violins, ideal cats, and unsubstantial kings.

Now, from the first moment when painting began to be a subject of literary inquiry and general criticism, I cannot remember any writer, not professedly artistical, who has not, more or less, in one part of his book or another, countenanced the idea that the great end of art is to produce a deceptive resemblance of reality. It may be, indeed, that we shall find the writers, through many pages, explaining principles of ideal beauty, and professing great delight in the evidences of imagination. But whenever a picture is to be definitely described,—whenever the writer desires to convey to others some impression of an extraordinary excellence, all praise is wound up with some such statements as these: "It was so exquisitely painted that you expected the figures to move and speak; you approached the flowers to enjoy their smell, and stretched your hand towards the fruit which had fallen from the branches. You shrunk back lest the sword of the warrior should indeed descend, and turned away your head that you might not witness the agonies of the expiring martyr!"

§ 2. In a large number of instances, language such as this will be found to be merely a clumsy effort to convey to others a

sense of the admiration, of which the writer does not understand the real cause in himself. A person is attracted to a picture by the beauty of its color, interested by the liveliness of its story, and touched by certain countenances or details which remind him of friends whom he loved, for scenes in which he delighted. He naturally supposes that what gives him so much pleasure must be a notable example of the painter's skill; but he is ashamed to confess, or perhaps does not know, that he is so much a child as to be fond of bright colors and amusing incidents; and he is quite unconscious of the associations which have so secret and inevitable a power over his heart. He casts about for the cause of his delight, and can discover no other than that he thought the picture like reality.

§ 3. In another, perhaps a still larger number of cases, such language will be found to be that of simple ignorance—the ignorance of persons whose position in life compels them to speak of art, without having any real enjoyment of it. It is inexcusably required from people of the world, that they should see merit in Claudes and Titians; and the only merit which many persons can either see or conceive in them is, that they must be "like nature."

§ 4. In other cases, the deceptive power of the art is really felt to be a source of interest and amusement. This is the case with a large number of the collectors of Dutch pictures. They enjoy seeing what is flat made to look round, exactly as a child enjoys a trick of legerdemain; they rejoice in flies which the spectator vainly attempts to brush away, and in dew which he endeavors to dry by putting the picture in the sun. They take it for the greatest compliment to their treasures that they should be mistaken for windows; and think the parting of Abraham and Hagar adequately represented, if Hagar seems to be really crying.

It is against critics and connoisseurs of this latter stamp (of whom, in the year 1759, the juries of art were for the most part composed) that the essay of Reynolds, which we have been examining, was justly directed. But Reynolds had not sufficiently considered that neither the men of this class, nor of the two other classes above described, constitute the entire body of those who praise Art for its realization; and that the holding

of this apparently shallow and vulgar opinion cannot, in all cases, be attributed to the want either of penetration, sincerity, or sense. The collectors of Gerard Dows and Hobbimas may be passed by with a smile; and the affectations of Walpole and simplicities of Vasari dismissed with contempt or with compassion. But very different men from these have held precisely the same language; and, one amongst the rest, whose authority is absolutely, and in all points, overwhelming.

§ 5. There was probably never a period in which the influence of art over the minds of men seemed to depend less on its merely *imitative* power, than the close of the thirteenth century. No painting or sculpture at that time reached more than a rude resemblance of reality. Its despised perspective, imperfect chiaroscuro, and unrestrained flights of fantastic imagination, separated the artist's work from nature by an interval which there was no attempt to disguise, and little to diminish. And yet, at this very period, the greatest poet of that, or perhaps of any other age, and the attached friend of its greatest painter, who must over and over again have held full and free conversation with him respecting the objects of his art, speaks in the following terms of painting, supposed to be carried to its highest perfection :—

"Qual di pennel fu maestro, e di stile
Che ritraesse l' ombre, e i tratti, ch' ivi
Mirar farieno uno ingegno sottile.
Morti li morti, e i vivi parean vivi:
Non vide me' di me, chi vide il vero,
Quant' io calcai, fin che chinato givi."

DANTE, *Purgatorio*, canto xii. l. 64.

'What master of the pencil, or the style,
Had traced the shades and lines that might have made
The subtlest workman wonder? *Dead, the dead,*
The living seemed alive; with clearer view
His eye beheld not, who beheld the truth,
Than mine what I did tread on, while I went,
Low bending.'

CAREY.

Dante has here clearly no other idea of the highest art than that it should bring back, as in a mirror or vision, the aspect of things passed or absent. The scenes of which he speaks are, on

the pavement, for ever represented by angelic power, so that the souls which traverse this circle of the rock may see them, as if the years of the world had been rolled back, and they again stood beside the actors in the moment of action. Nor do I think that Dante's authority is absolutely necessary to compel us to admit that such art as this *might* indeed be the highest possible. Whatever delight we may have been in the habit of taking in pictures, if it were but truly offered to us, to remove at our will the canvas from the frame, and in lieu of it to behold, fixed for ever, the image of some of those mighty scenes which it has been our way to make mere themes for the artist's fancy; if, for instance, we could again behold the Magdalene receiving her pardon at Christ's feet, or the disciples sitting with Him at the table of Emmaus; and this not feebly nor fancifully, but as if some silver mirror, that had leaned against the wall of the chamber, had been miraculously commanded to retain for ever the colors that had flashed upon it for an instant,—would we not part with our picture—Titian's or Veronese's though it might be?

§ 6. Yes, the reader answers, in the instance of such scenes as these, but not if the scene represented were uninteresting. Not, indeed, if it were utterly vulgar or painful; but we are not yet certain that the art which represents what is vulgar or painful is itself of much value; and with respect to the art whose aim is beauty, even of an inferior order, it seems that Dante's idea of its perfection has still much evidence in its favor. For among persons of native good sense, and courage enough to speak their minds, we shall often find a considerable degree of doubt as to the use of art, in consequence of their habitual comparison of it with reality. "What is the use, to me, of the painted landscape?" they will ask: "I see more beautiful and perfect landscapes every day of my life in my forenoon walk." "What is the use, to me, of the painted effigy of hero or beauty? I can see a stamp of higher heroism, and light of purer beauty, on the faces around me, utterly inexpressible by the highest human skill." Now, it is evident that to persons of this temper the only valuable pictures would indeed be *mirrors*, reflecting permanently the images of the things in which they took delight, and of the faces that they loved. "Nay," but the reader

interrupts, (if he is of the Idealist school) "I deny that more beautiful things are to be seen in nature than in art; on the contrary, everything in nature is faulty, and art represents nature as perfected." Be it so. Must, therefore, this perfected nature be imperfectly represented? Is it absolutely required of the painter, who has conceived perfection, that he should so paint it as to look only like a picture? Or is not Dante's view of the matter right even here, and would it not be well that the perfect conception of Pallas should be so given as to look like Pallas herself, rather than merely like the picture of Pallas?

§ 7. It is not easy for us to answer this question rightly, owing to the difficulty of imagining any art which should reach the perfection supposed. Our actual powers of imitation are so feeble that wherever deception is attempted, a subject of a comparatively low or confined order must be chosen. I do not enter at present into the inquiry how far the powers of imitation extend; but assuredly up to the present period they have been so limited that it is hardly possible for us to conceive a deceptive art embracing a high range of subject. But let the reader make the effort, and consider seriously what he would give at any moment to have the power of arresting the fairest scenes, those which so often rise before him only to vanish; to stay the cloud in its fading, the leaf in its trembling, and the shadows in their changing; to bid the fitful foam be fixed upon the river, and the ripples be everlasting upon the lake; and then to bear away with him no darkened or feeble sun-stain (though even that is beautiful), but a counterfeit which should seem no counterfeit —the true and perfect image of life indeed. Or rather (for the full majesty of such a power is not thus sufficiently expressed) let him consider that it would be in effect nothing else than a capacity of transporting himself at any moment into any scene —a gift as great as can be possessed by a disembodied spirit: and suppose, also, this necromancy embracing not only the present but the past, and enabling us seemingly to enter into the very bodily presence of men long since gathered to the dust; to behold them in act as they lived, but—with greater privilege than ever was granted to the companions of those transient acts of life,—to see them fastened at our will in the gesture and e:

pression of an instant, and stayed, on the eve of some great deed, in immortality of burning purpose. Conceive, so far as it is possible, such power as this, and then say whether the art which conferred it is to be spoken lightly of, or whether we should not rather reverence, as half divine, a gift which would go so far as to raise us into the rank, and invest us with the felicities, of angels?

Yet such would imitative art be in its perfection. Not by any means an easy thing, as Reynolds supposes it. Far from being easy, it is so utterly beyond all human power that we have difficulty even in conceiving its nature or results—the best art we as yet possess comes so far short of it.

§ 8. But we must not rashly come to the conclusion that such art would, indeed, be the highest possible. There is much to be considered hereafter on the other side; the only conclusion we are as yet warranted in forming is, that Reynolds had no right to speak lightly or contemptuously of imitative art; that in fact, when he did so, he had not conceived its entire nature, but was thinking of some vulgar conditions of it, which were the only ones known to him, and that, therefore, his whole endeavor to explain the difference between great and mean art has been disappointed; that he has involved himself in a crowd of theories, whose issue he had not foreseen, and committed himself to conclusions which he never intended. There is an instinctive consciousness in his own mind of the difference between high and low art; but he is utterly incapable of explaining it, and every effort which he makes to do so involves him in unexpected fallacy and absurdity. It is *not* true that Poetry does not concern herself with minute details. It is *not* true that high art seeks only the Invariable. It is *not* true that imitative art is an easy thing. It is *not* true that the faithful rendering of nature is an employment in which "the slowest intellect is likely to succeed best." All these successive assertions are utterly false and untenable, while the plain truth, a truth lying at the very door, has all the while escaped him,—that which was incidentally stated in the preceding chapter,—namely, that the difference between great and mean art lies, not in definable methods of handling, or styles of representation, or choices of subjects, but wholly in the nobleness of the end to

which the effort of the painter is addressed. We cannot say that a painter is great because he paints boldly, or paints delicately; because he generalizes or particularizes; because he loves detail, or because he disdains it. He is great if, by any of these means, he has laid open noble truths, or aroused noble emotions. It does not matter whether he paint the petal of a rose, or the chasms of a precipice, so that Love and Admiration attend him as he labors, and wait for ever upon his work. It does not matter whether he toil for months upon a few inches of his canvas, or cover a palace front with color in a day, so only that it be with a solemn purpose that he has filled his heart with patience, or urged his hand to haste. And it does not matter whether he seek for his subjects among peasants or nobles, among the heroic or the simple, in courts or in fields, so only that he behold all things with a thirst for beauty, and a hatred of meanness and vice. There are, indeed, certain methods of representation which are usually adopted by the most active minds, and certain characters of subject usually delighted in by the noblest hearts; but it is quite possible, quite easy, to adopt the manner of painting without sharing the activity of mind, and to imitate the choice of subject without possessing the nobility of spirit; while, on the other hand, it is altogether impossible to foretell on what strange objects the strength of a great man will sometimes be concentrated, or by what strange means he will sometimes express himself. So that true criticism of art never can consist in the mere application of rules; it can be just only when it is founded on quick sympathy with the innumerable instincts and changeful efforts of human nature, chastened and guided by unchanging love of all things that God has created to be beautiful, and pronounced to be good.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE REAL NATURE OF GREATNESS OF STYLE.

§ 1. I DOUBT not that the reader was ill-satisfied with the conclusion arrived at in the last chapter. That "great art" is art which represents what is beautiful and good, may not seem a very profound discovery; and the main question may be thought to have been all the time lost sight of, namely, "What is beautiful, and what is good?" No; those are not the main, at least not the first questions; on the contrary, our subject becomes at once opened and simplified as soon as we have left those the *only* questions. For observe, our present task, according to our old plan, is merely to investigate the relative degrees of the *beautiful* in the art of different masters; and it is an encouragement to be convinced, first of all, that what is lovely will also be great, and what is pleasing, noble. Nor is the conclusion so much a matter of course as it at first appears, for, surprising as the statement may seem, all the confusion into which Reynolds has plunged both himself and his readers, in the essay we have been examining, results primarily from a doubt in his own mind *as to the existence of beauty at all.* In the next paper I alluded to, No. 82 (which needs not, however, to be examined at so great length), he calmly attributes the whole influence of beauty to custom, saying, that "he has no doubt, if we were more used to deformity than to beauty, deformity would then lose the idea now annexed to it, and take that of beauty; as if the whole world shall agree that Yes and No should change their meanings. Yes would then deny, and No would affirm!"

§ 2. The world does, indeed, succeed—oftener than is, perhaps, altogether well for the world—in making Yes mean No, and No mean Yes.* But the world has never succeeded, nor

* Del "nò," per lì danar, vi "sì" far ita.

ever will, in making itself delight in black clouds more than in blue sky, or love the dark earth better than the rose that grows from it. Happily for mankind, beauty and ugliness are as positive in their nature as physical pain and pleasure, as light and darkness, or as life and death ; and, though they may be denied or misunderstood in many fantastic ways, the most subtle reasoner will at last find that color and sweetness are still attractive to him, and that no logic will enable him to think the rainbow sombre, or the violet scentless. But the theory that beauty was merely a result of custom was very common in Johnson's time. Goldsmith has, I think, expressed it with more force and wit than any other writer, in various passages of the Citizen of the World. And it was, indeed, a curious retribution of the folly of the world of art, which for some three centuries had given itself recklessly to the pursuit of beauty, that at last it should be led to deny the very existence of what it had so morbidly and passionately sought. It was as if a child should leave its home to pursue the rainbow, and then, breathless and hopeless, declare that it did not exist. Nor is the lesson less useful which may be gained in observing the adoption of such a theory by Reynolds himself. It shows how completely an artist may be unconscious of the principles of his own work, and how he may be led by instinct to *do* all that is right, while he is misled by false logic to *say* all that is wrong. For nearly every word that Reynolds wrote was contrary to his own practice ; he seems to have been born to teach all error by his precept, and all excellence by his example ; he enforced with his lips generalization and idealism, while with his pencil he was tracing the patterns of the dresses of the belles of his day ; he exhorted his pupils to attend only to the invariable, while he himself was occupied in distinguishing every variation of womanly temper ; and he denied the existence of the beautiful, at the same instant that he arrested it as it passed, and perpetuated it for ever.

§ 3. But we must not quit the subject here. However inconsistently or dimly expressed, there is, indeed, some truth in that commonly accepted distinction between high and low art. That a thing should be beautiful is not enough ; there is, as we said in the outset, a higher and lower range of beauty, and some ground for separating into various and unequal ranks painters

who have, nevertheless, each in his several way, represented something that was beautiful or good.

Nor, if we would, can we get rid of this conviction. We have at all times some instinctive sense that the function of one painter is greater than that of another, even supposing each equally successful in his own way; and we feel that, if it were possible to conquer prejudice, and do away with the iniquities of personal feeling, and the insufficiencies of limited knowledge, we should all agree in this estimate, and be able to place each painter in his right rank, measuring them by a true scale of nobleness. We feel that the men in the higher classes of the scale would be, in the full sense of the word, Great—men whom one would give much to see the faces of but for an instant; and that those in the lower classes of the scale (though none were admitted but who had true merit of some kind) would be very small men, not greatly exciting either reverence or curiosity. And with this fixed instinct in our minds, we permit our teachers daily to exhort their pupils to the cultivation of "great art"—neither they nor we having any very clear notion as to what the greatness consists in: but sometimes inclining to think it must depend on the space of the canvas, and that art on a scale of 6 feet by 10 is something spiritually separated from that on a scale of 3 feet by 5;—sometimes holding it to consist in painting the nude body, rather than the body decently clothed;—sometimes being convinced that it is connected with the study of past history, and that the art is only great which represents what the painter never saw, and about which he knows nothing;—and sometimes being firmly persuaded that it consists in generally finding fault with, and endeavoring to mend, whatsoever the Divine Wisdom has made. All which various errors, having yet some motes and atoms of truth in the make of each of them, deserve some attentive analysis, for they come under that general law,—that "the corruption of the best is the worst." There are not *worse* errors going than these four; and yet the truth they contain, and the instinct which urges many to preach them, are at the root of all healthy growth in art. We ruin one young painter after another by telling him to follow great art, without knowing, ourselves, what greatness is; and yet the feeling that it verily *is* something, and that there

are depths and breadths, shallows and narrows, in the matter, is all that we have to look to, if we would ever make our art serviceable to ourselves or others. To follow art for the sake of being a great man, and therefore to cast about continually for some means of achieving position or attracting admiration, is the surest way of ending in total extinction. And yet it is only by honest reverence for art itself, and by great self-respect in the practice of it, that it can be rescued from dilettantism, raised to approved honorableness, and brought to the proper work it has to accomplish in the service of man.

§ 4. Let us therefore look into the facts of the thing, not with any metaphysical, or otherwise vain and troublesome effort at acuteness, but in a plain way; for the facts themselves are plain enough, and may be plainly stated, only the difficulty is that out of these facts, right and left, the different forms of misapprehension branch into grievous complexity, and branch so far and wide, that if once we try to follow them, they will lead us quite from our mark into other separate, though not less interesting discussions. The best way will be, therefore, I think, to sketch out at once in this chapter, the different characters which really constitute "greatness" of style, and to indicate the principal directions of the outbranching misapprehensions of them; then, in the succeeding chapters, to take up in succession those which need more talk about them, and follow out at leisure whatever inquiries they may suggest.

§ 5. I. CHOICE OF NOBLE SUBJECT.—Greatness of style consists, then: first, in the habitual choice of subjects of thought which involve wide interests and profound passions, as opposed to those which involve narrow interests and slight passions. The style is greater or less in exact proportion to the nobleness of the interests and passions involved in the subject. The habitual choice of sacred subjects, such as the Nativity, Transfiguration, Crucifixion (if the choice be sincere), implies that the painter has a natural disposition to dwell on the highest thoughts of which humanity is capable; it constitutes him so far forth a painter of the highest order, as, for instance, Leonardo, in his painting of the Last Supper: he who delights in representing the acts or meditations of great men, as, for instance, Raphael painting the School of Athens, is, so far

forth, a painter of the second order: he who represents the passions and events of ordinary life, of the third. And in this ordinary life, he who represents deep thoughts and sorrows, as, for instance, Hunt, in his Claudio and Isabella, and such other works, is of the highest rank in his sphere; and he who represents the slight malignities and passions of the drawing-room, as, for instance, Leslie, of the second rank: he who represents the sports of boys or simplicities of clowns, as Webster or Teniers, of the third rank; and he who represents brutalities and vices (for delight in them, and not for rebuke of them), of no rank at all, or rather of a negative rank, holding a certain order in the abyss.

§ 6. The reader will, I hope, understand how much importance is to be attached to the sentence in the first parenthesis, "if the choice be sincere;" for choice of subject is, of course, only available as a criterion of the rank of the painter, when it is made from the heart. Indeed, in the lower orders of painting, the choice is always made from such heart as the painter has; for his selection of the brawls of peasants or sports of children can, of course, proceed only from the fact that he has more sympathy with such brawls or pastimes than with nobler subjects. But the choice of the higher kind of subjects is often insincere; and may, therefore, afford no real criterion of the painter's rank. The greater number of men who have lately painted religious or heroic subjects have done so in mere ambition, because they had been taught that it was a good thing to be a "high art" painter; and the fact is that, in nine cases out of ten, the so-called historical or "high-art" painter is a person infinitely inferior to the painter of flowers or still life. He is, in modern times, nearly always a man who has great vanity without pictorial capacity, and differs from the landscape or fruit painter merely in misunderstanding and over-estimating his own powers. He mistakes his vanity for inspiration, his ambition for greatness of soul, and takes pleasure in what he calls "the ideal," merely because he has neither humility nor capacity enough to comprehend the real.

§ 7. But also observe, it is not enough even that the choice be sincere. It must also be wise. It happens very often that a man of weak intellect, sincerely desiring to do what is good and

useful, will devote himself to high art subjects because he thinks them the only ones on which time and toil can be usefully spent, or, sometimes, because they are really the only ones he has pleasure in contemplating. But not having intellect enough to enter into the minds of truly great men, or to imagine great events as they really happened, he cannot become a great painter; he degrades the subjects he intended to honor, and his work is more utterly thrown away, and his rank as an artist in reality lower, than if he had devoted himself to the imitation of the simplest objects of natural history. The works of Overbeck are a most notable instance of this form of error.

§ 8. It must also be remembered, that in nearly all the great periods of art the choice of subject has not been left to the painter. His employer,—abbot, baron, or monarch,—determined for him whether he should earn his bread by making cloisters bright with choirs of saints, painting coats of arms on leaves of romances, or decorating presence-chambers with complimentary mythology; and his own personal feelings are ascertainable only by watching, in the themes assigned to him, what are the points in which he seems to take most pleasure. Thus, in the prolonged ranges of varied subjects with which Benozzo Gozzoli decorated the cloisters of Pisa, it is easy to see that love of simple domestic incident, sweet landscape, and glittering ornament, prevails slightly over the solemn elements of religious feeling, which, nevertheless, the spirit of the age instilled into him in such measure as to form a very lovely and noble mind, though still one of the second order. In the work of Orcagna, an intense solemnity and energy in the sublimest groups of his figures, fading away as he touches inferior subjects, indicates that his home was among the archangels, and his rank among the first of the sons of men: while Correggio, in the sidelong grace, artificial smiles, and purple languors of his saints, indicates the inferior instinct which would have guided his choice in quite other directions, had it not been for the fashion of the age, and the need of the day.

§ 9. It will follow, of course, from the above considerations, that the choice which characterises the school of high art is seen as much in the treatment of a subject as in its selection, and that the expression of the thoughts of the persons represented

will always be the first thing considered by the painter who worthily enters that highest school. For the artist who sincerely chooses the noblest subject will also choose chiefly to represent what makes that subject noble, namely, the various heroism or other noble emotions of the persons represented. If, instead of this, the artist seeks only to make his picture agreeable by the composition of its masses and colors, or by any other merely pictorial merit, as fine drawing of limbs, it is evident, not only that any other subject would have answered his purpose as well, but that he is unfit to approach the subject he has chosen, because he cannot enter into its deepest meaning, and therefore cannot in reality have chosen it for that meaning. Nevertheless, while the expression is always to be the first thing considered, all other merits must be added to the utmost of the painter's power; for until he can both color and draw beautifully he has no business to consider himself a painter at all, far less to attempt the noblest subjects of painting; and, when he has once possessed himself of these powers, he will naturally and fitly employ them to deepen and perfect the impression made by the sentiment of his subject.

The perfect unison of expression, as the painter's main purpose, with the full and natural exertion of his pictorial power in the details of the work, is found only in the old Pre-Raphaelite periods, and in the modern Pre-Raphaelite school. In the works of Giotto, Angelico, Orcagna, John Bellini, and one or two more, these two conditions of high art are entirely fulfilled, so far as the knowledge of those days enabled them to be fulfilled; and in the modern Pre-Raphaelite school they are fulfilled nearly to the uttermost. Hunt's Light of the World is, I believe, the most perfect instance of expressional purpose with technical power, which the world has yet produced.

§ 10. Now in the Post Raphaelite period of ancient art, and in the spurious high art of modern times, two broad forms of error divide the schools; the one consisting in (A) the superseding of expression by technical excellence, and the other in (B) the superseding of technical excellence by expression.

(A). Superseding expression by technical excellence.—This takes place most frankly, and therefore most innocently, in the work of the Venetians. They very nearly ignore expression al-

together, directing their aim exclusively to the rendering of external truths of color and form. Paul Veronese will make the Magdalene wash the feet of Christ with a countenance as absolutely unmoved as that of any ordinary servant bringing a ewer to her master, and will introduce the supper at Emmaus as a background to the portraits of two children playing with a dog. Of the wrongness or rightness of such a proceeding we shall reason in another place; at present we have to note it merely as displacing the Venetian work from the highest or expressional rank of art. But the error is generally made in a more subtle and dangerous way. The artist deceives himself into the idea that he is doing all he can to elevate his subject by treating it under rules of art, introducing into it accurate science, and collecting for it the beauties of (so-called) ideal form; whereas he may, in reality, be all the while sacrificing his subject to his own vanity or pleasure, and losing truth, nobleness, and impressiveness for the sake of delightful lines or creditable pedantries.

§ 11. (B). Superseding technical excellence by expression.—This is usually done under the influence of another kind of vanity. The artist desires that men should think he has an elevated soul, affects to despise the ordinary excellence of art, contemplates with separated egotism the course of his own imaginations or sensations, and refuses to look at the real facts round about him, in order that he may adore at leisure the shadow of himself. He lives in an element of what he calls tender emotions and lofty aspirations; which are, in fact, nothing more than very ordinary weaknesses or instincts, contemplated through a mist of pride. A large range of modern German art comes under this head.

A more interesting and respectable form of this error is fallen into by some truly earnest men, who, finding their powers not adequate to the attainment of great artistical excellence, but adequate to rendering, up to a certain point, the expression of the human countenance, devote themselves to that object alone, abandoning effort in other directions, and executing the accessaries of their pictures feebly or carelessly. With these are associated another group of philosophical painters, who suppose the artistical merits of other parts *adverse* to the expression, as

drawing the spectator's attention away from it, and who paint in grey color, and imperfect light and shade, by way of enforcing the purity of their conceptions. Both these classes of conscientious but narrow-minded artists labor under the same grievous mistake of imagining that wilful fallacy can ever be either pardonable or helpful. They forget that color, if used at all, must be either true or false, and that what *they* call chastity, dignity, and reserve, is, to the eye of any person accustomed to nature, pure, bold, and impertinent falsehood. It does not, in the eyes of any soundly minded man, exalt the expression of a female face that the cheeks should be painted of the color of clay, nor does it in the least enhance his reverence for a saint to find the scenery around him deprived, by his presence, of sunshine. It is an important consolation, however, to reflect that no artist ever fell into any of these last three errors (under head B.) who had really the capacity of becoming a great painter. No man ever despised color who could produce it; and the error of these sentimentalists and philosophers is not so much in the choice of their manner of painting, as in supposing themselves capable of painting at all. Some of them might have made efficient sculptors, but the greater number had their mission in some other sphere than that of art, and would have found, in works of practical charity, better employment for their gentleness and sentimentalism, than in denying to human beauty its color, and to natural scenery its light; in depriving heaven of its blue, and earth of its bloom, valor of its glow, and modesty of its blush.

§ 12. II. LOVE OF BEAUTY.—The second characteristic of the great school of art is, that it introduces in the conception of its subject as much beauty as is possible, consistently with truth.*

* As here, for the first time, I am obliged to use the terms Truth and Beauty in a kind of opposition, I must therefore stop for a moment to state clearly the relation of these two qualities of art; and to protest against the vulgar and foolish habit of confusing truth and beauty with each other. People with shallow powers of thought, desiring to flatter themselves with the sensation of having attained profundity, are continually doing the most serious mischief by introducing confusion into plain matters, and then valuing themselves on being confounded. Nothing is more common than to hear

For instance, in any subject consisting of a number of figures, it will make as many of those figures beautiful as the faithful representation of humanity will admit. It will not deny the facts of ugliness or decrepitude, or relative inferiority and

people who desire to be thought philosophical, declare that "beauty is truth," and "truth is beauty." I would most earnestly beg every sensible person who hears such an assertion made, to nip the germinating philosopher in his ambiguous bud; and beg him, if he really believes his own assertion, never thenceforward to use two words for the same thing. The fact is, truth and beauty are entirely distinct, though often related, things. One is a property of statements, the other of objects. The statement that "two and two make four" is true, but it is neither beautiful nor ugly, for it is invisible; a rose is lovely, but it is neither true nor false, for it is silent. That which shows nothing cannot be fair, and that which asserts nothing cannot be false. Even the ordinary use of the words false and true as applied to artificial and real things, is inaccurate. An artificial rose is not a "false" rose, it is not a rose at all. The falseness is in the person who states, or induces the belief, that it *is* a rose.

Now, therefore, in things concerning art, the words true and false are only to be rightly used while the picture is considered as a statement of facts. The painter asserts that this which he has painted is the form of a dog, a man, or a tree. If it be *not* the form of a dog, a man, or a tree, the painter's statement is false; and therefore we justly speak of a false line, or false color; not that any line or color can in themselves be false, but they become so when they convey a statement that they resemble something which they do *not* resemble. But the beauty of the lines or colors is wholly independent of any such statement. They may be beautiful lines, though quite inaccurate, and ugly lines though quite faithful. A picture may be frightfully ugly, which represents with fidelity some base circumstance of daily life; and a painted window may be exquisitely beautiful, which represents men with eagles' faces, and dogs with blue heads and crimson tails (though, by the way, this is not in the strict sense *false* art, as we shall see hereafter, inasmuch as it means no assertion that men ever *had* eagles' faces). If this were not so, it would be impossible to sacrifice truth to beauty; for to attain the one would always be to attain the other. But, unfortunately, this sacrifice is exceedingly possible, and it is chiefly this which characterizes the false schools of high art, so far as high art consists in the pursuit of beauty. For although truth and beauty are independent of each other, it does not follow that we are at liberty to pursue whichever we please. They are indeed separable, but it is wrong to separate them; they are to be sought together in the order of their worthiness; that is to say, truth first, and beauty afterwards. High art differs from low art in possessing an excess of beauty in addition to its truth, not in possessing an excess of beauty inconsistent with truth.

superiority of feature as necessarily manifested in a crowd, but it will, so far as it is in its power, seek for and dwell upon the fairest forms, and in all things insist on the beauty that is in them, not on the ugliness. In this respect, schools of art become higher in exact proportion to the degree in which they apprehend and love the beautiful. Thus, Angelico, intensely loving all spiritual beauty, will be of the highest rank; and Paul Veronese and Correggio, intensely loving physical and corporeal beauty, of the second rank; and Albert Durer, Rubens, and in general the Northern artists, apparently insensible to beauty, and caring only for truth, whether shapely or not, of the third rank; and Teniers and Salvator, Caravaggio, and other such worshippers of the depraved, of no rank, or, as we said before, of a certain order in the abyss.

§ 13. The corruption of the schools of high art, so far as this particular quality is concerned, consists in the sacrifice of truth to beauty. Great art dwells on all that is beautiful; but false art omits or changes all that is ugly. Great art accepts Nature as she is, but directs the eyes and thoughts to what is most perfect in her; false art saves itself the trouble of direction by removing or altering whatever it thinks objectionable. The evil results of which proceeding are twofold.

First. That beauty deprived of its proper foils and adjuncts ceases to be enjoyed as beauty, just as light deprived of all shadow ceases to be enjoyed as light. A white canvas cannot produce an effect of sunshine; the painter must darken it in some places before he can make it look luminous in others; nor can an uninterrupted succession of beauty produce the true effect of beauty; it must be foiled by inferiority before its own power can be developed. Nature has for the most part mingled her inferior and nobler elements as she mingles sunshine with shade, giving due use and influence to both, and the painter who chooses to remove the shadow, perishes in the burning desert he has created. The truly high and beautiful art of Angelico is continually refreshed and strengthened by his frank portraiture of the most ordinary features of his brother monks, and of the recorded peculiarities of ungainly sanctity; but the modern German and Raphaelesque schools lose all honor and nobleness

§ 14. Evil first,—that we lose the true *force* of beauty.

in barber-like admiration of handsome faces, and have, in fact, no real faith except in straight noses and curled hair. Paul Veronese opposes the dwarf to the soldier, and the negress to the queen; Shakspere places Caliban beside Miranda, and Autolycus beside Perdita; but the vulgar idealist withdraws his beauty to the safety of the saloon, and his innocence to the seclusion of the cloister; he pretends that he does this in delicacy of choice and purity of sentiment, while in truth he has neither courage to front the monster, nor wit enough to furnish the knave.

It is only by the habit of representing faithfully all things, that we can truly learn what is beautiful and what is not. The ugliest objects contain some element of beauty; and in all, it is an element peculiar to themselves, which cannot be separated from their ugliness, but must either be enjoyed together with it, or not at all. The more a painter accepts nature as he finds it, the more unexpected beauty he discovers in what he at first despised; but once let him arrogate the right of rejection, and he will gradually contract his circle of enjoyment, until what he supposed to be nobleness of selection ends in narrowness of perception. Dwelling perpetually upon one class of ideas, his art becomes at once monstrous and morbid; until at last he cannot faithfully represent even what he chooses to retain; his discrimination contracts into darkness, and his fastidiousness fades into fatuity.

§ 15. Evil second, —we lose the true *quantity* of beauty.

High art, therefore, consists neither in altering, nor in improving nature; but in seeking throughout nature for "whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are pure;" in loving these, in displaying to the utmost of the painter's power such loveliness as is in them, and directing the thoughts of others to them by winning art, or gentle emphasis. Of the degree in which this can be done, and in which it may be permitted to gather together, without falsifying, the finest forms or thoughts, so as to create a sort of perfect vision, we shall have to speak hereafter: at present, it is enough to remember that art (*cæteris paribus*) is great in exact proportion to the love of beauty shown by the painter, provided that love of beauty forfeit no atom of truth.

§ 16. III. SINCERITY.—The next* characteristic of great art is that it includes the largest possible quantity of Truth in the most perfect possible harmony. If it were possible for art to give all the truths of nature, it ought to do it. But this is not possible. Choice must always be made of some facts which *can* be represented, from among others which must be passed by in silence, or even, in some respects, misrepresented. The inferior artist chooses unimportant and scattered truths; the great artist chooses the most necessary first, and afterwards the most consistent with these, so as to obtain the greatest possible and most harmonious *sum*. For instance, Rembrandt always chooses to represent the exact force with which the light on the most illumined part of an object is opposed to its obscurer portions. In order to obtain this, in most cases, not very important truth, he sacrifices the light and color of five sixths of his picture; and the expression of every character of objects which depends on tenderness of shape or tint. But he obtains his single truth, and what picturesque and forcible expression is dependent upon it, with magnificent skill and subtlety. Veronese, on the contrary, chooses to represent the great relations of visible things to each other, to the heaven above, and to the earth beneath them. He holds it more important to show how a figure stands relieved from delicate air, or marble wall; how as a red, or purple, or white figure, it separates itself, in clear discernibility, from things not red, nor purple, nor white; how infinite daylight shines round it; how innumerable veils of faint shadow invest it; how its blackness and darkness are, in the excess of their nature, just as limited and local as its intensity of light: all this, I say, he feels to be more important than showing merely the exact *measure* of the spark of sunshine that gleams on a dagger-hilt, or glows on a jewel. All this, moreover, he feels to be harmonious,—capable of being joined in one great system of spacious truth. And with inevitable watchfulness, inestimable subtlety, he unites all this in tenderest balance, noting in each hair's-breadth of color, not merely what its rightness or wrongness is in itself, but what its relation is to every other on his canvas; restraining, for truth's sake, his exhaustless energy, reining back, for truth's sake, his fiery strength;

* I name them in order of *increasing* not decreasing importance.

veiling, before truth, the vanity of brightness; penetrating, for truth, the discouragement of gloom; ruling his restless invention with a rod of iron; pardoning no error, no thoughtlessness, no forgetfulness; and subduing all his powers, impulses, and imaginations, to the arbitrament of a merciless justice, and the obedience of an incorruptible verity.

I give this instance with respect to color and shade; but, in the whole field of art, the difference between the great and inferior artists is of the same kind, and may be determined at once by the question, which of them conveys the largest sum of truth? It follows from this principle, that in general all *great* drawing is *distinct* drawing; for truths which are rendered indistinctly might, for the most part, as well not be rendered at all. There are, indeed, certain facts of mystery, and facts of indistinctness, in all objects, which must have their proper place in the general harmony, and the reader will presently find me, when we come to that part of our investigation, telling him that all good drawing must in some sort be *in*distinct. We may, however, understand this apparent contradiction, by reflecting that the highest knowledge always involves a more advanced perception of the fields of the unknown; and, therefore, it may most truly be said, that to know anything well involves a profound sensation of ignorance, while yet it is equally true that good and noble knowledge is distinguished from vain and useless knowledge chiefly by its clearness and distinctness, and by the vigorous consciousness of what is known and what is not.

§ 17. Corollary 1st: great art is generally distinct.

So in art. The best drawing involves a wonderful perception and expression of indistinctness; and yet all noble drawing is separated from the ignoble by its distinctness, by its fine expression and firm assertion of *Something;* whereas the bad drawing, without either firmness or fineness, expresses and asserts *Nothing.* The first thing, therefore, to be looked for as a sign of noble art, is a clear consciousness of what is drawn and what is not; the bold statement, and frank confession—"*This* I know," "*that* I know not;" and, generally speaking, all haste, slurring, obscurity, indecision, are signs of low art, and all calmness, distinctness, luminousness, and positiveness, of high art.

It follows, secondly, from this principle, that as the great painter is always attending to the sum and harmony of his truths rather than to one or the other of any group, a quality of Grasp is visible in his work, like the power of a great reasoner over his subject, or a great poet over his conception, manifesting itself very often in missing out certain details or less truths (which, though good in themselves, he finds are in the way of others), and in a sweeping manner of getting the beginnings and ends of things shown at once, and the squares and depths rather than the surfaces: hence, on the whole, a habit of looking at large masses rather than small ones; and even a physical largeness of handling, and love of working, if possible, on a large scale; and various other qualities, more or less imperfectly expressed by such technical terms as breadth, massing, unity, boldness, &c., all of which are, indeed, great qualities when they mean breadth of truth, weight of truth, unity of truth, and courageous assertion of truth; but which have all their correlative errors and mockeries, almost universally mistaken for them, —the breadth which has no contents, the weight which has no value, the unity which plots deception, and the boldness which faces out fallacy.

§ 18. Corollary 2d: Great art is generally large in masses and in scale.

§ 19. And it is to be noted especially respecting largeness of scale, that though for the most part it is characteristic of the more powerful masters, they having both more invention wherewith to fill space (as Ghirlandajo wished that he might paint all the walls of Florence), and, often, an impetuosity of mind which makes them like free play for hand and arm (besides that they usually desire to paint everything in the foreground of their picture of the natural size), yet, as this largeness of scale involves the placing of the picture at a considerable distance from the eye, and this distance involves the loss of many delicate details, and especially of the subtle lines of expression in features, it follows that the masters of refined detail and human expression are apt to prefer a small scale to work upon; so that the chief masterpieces of expression which the world possesses are small pictures by Angelico, in which the figures are rarely more than six or seven inches high; in the best works of Raphael and Leonardo the figures are almost always less than

life, and the best works of Turner do not exceed the size of 18 inches by 12.

§ 20. Corollary 3d: Great art is always delicate.

As its greatness depends on the sum of truth, and this sum of truth can always be increased by delicacy of handling, it follows that all great art must have this delicacy to the utmost possible degree. This rule is infallible and inflexible. All coarse work is the sign of low art. Only, it is to be remembered, that coarseness must be estimated by the distance from the eye; it being necessary to consult this distance, when great, by laying on touches which appear coarse when seen near; but which, so far from being coarse, are, in reality, more delicate in a master's work than the finest close handling, for they involve a calculation of result, and are laid on with a subtlety of sense precisely correspondent to that with which a good archer draws his bow; the spectator seeing in the action nothing but the strain of the strong arm, while there is, in reality, in the finger and eye, an ineffably delicate estimate of distance, and touch on the arrow plume. And, indeed, this delicacy is generally quite perceptible to those who know what the truth is, for strokes by Tintoret or Paul Veronese, which were done in an instant, and look to an ignorant spectator merely like a violent dash of loaded color, (and are, as such, imitated by blundering artists,) are, in fact, modulated by the brush and finger to that degree of delicacy that no single grain of the color could be taken from the touch without injury; and little golden particles of it, not the size of a gnat's head, have important share and function in the balances of light in a picture perhaps fifty feet long. Nearly *every* other rule applicable to art has some exception but this. This has absolutely none. All great art is delicate art, and all coarse art is bad art. Nay, even to a certain extent, all *bold* art is bad art; for boldness is not the proper word to apply to the courage and swiftness of a great master, based on knowledge, and coupled with fear and love. There is as much difference between the boldness of the true and the false masters, as there is between the courage of a pure woman and the shamelessness of a lost one.

§ 21. IV. INVENTION.—The last characteristic of great art is that it must be inventive, that is, be produced by the imagi-

nation. In this respect, it must precisely fulfil the definition already given of poetry; and not only present grounds for noble emotion, but furnish these grounds by *imaginative power.* Hence there is at once a great bar fixed between the two schools of Lower and Higher Art. The lower merely copies what is set before it, whether in portrait, landscape, or still-life; the higher either entirely imagines its subject, or arranges the materials presented to it, so as to manifest the imaginative power in all the three phases which have been already explained in the second volume.

And this was the truth which was confusedly present in Reynolds's mind when he spoke, as above quoted, of the difference between Historical and Poetical Painting. *Every relation of the plain facts which the painter saw* is proper *historical* painting.* If those facts are unimportant (as that he saw a gambler quarrel with another gambler, or a sot enjoying himself with another sot), then the history is trivial; if the facts are important (as that he saw such and such a great man look thus, or act thus, at such a time), then the history is noble: in each case perfect truth of narrative being supposed, otherwise the whole thing is worthless, being neither history nor poetry, but plain falsehood. And farther, as greater or less elegance and precision are manifested in the relation or painting of the incidents, the merit of the work varies; so that, what with difference of subject, and what with difference of treatment, historical painting falls or rises in changeful eminence, from Dutch trivialities to a Velasquez portrait, just as historical talking or writing varies in eminence, from an old woman's story-telling up to Herodotus. Besides which, certain operations of the imagination come into play inevitably, here and there, so as to touch the history with some light of poetry, that is, with some light shot forth of the narrator's mind, or brought out by the way he has put the accidents together; and wherever the imagination has thus had anything to do with the matter at all (and it must be somewhat cold work where it has not), then, the confines of the lower and higher schools touching each other, the work is colored by both; but there is no reason why, therefore,

* Compare my Edinburgh Lectures, lecture iv. p. 218, et seq. (2nd edition).

we should in the least confuse the historical and poetical characters, any more than that we should confuse blue with crimson, because they may overlap each other, and produce purple.

§ 22. Now, historical or simply narrative art is very precious in its proper place and way, but it is never *great* art until the poetical or imaginative power touches it; and in proportion to the stronger manifestation of this power, it becomes greater and greater, while the highest art is purely imaginative, all its materials being wrought into their form by invention; and it differs, therefore, from the simple historical painting, exactly as Wordsworth's stanza, above quoted, differ's from Saussure's plain narrative of the parallel fact; and the imaginative painter differs from the historical painter in the manner that Wordsworth differs from Saussure.

§ 23. Farther, imaginative art always *includes* historical art; so that, strictly speaking, according to the analogy above used, we meet with the pure blue, and with the crimson ruling the blue and changing it into kingly purple, but not with the pure crimson: for all imagination must deal with the knowledge it has before accumulated; it never produces anything but by combination or contemplation. Creation, in the full sense, is impossible to it. And the mode in which the historical faculties are included by it is often quite simple, and easily seen. Thus, in Hunt's great poetical picture of the Light of the World, the whole thought and arrangement of the picture being imaginative, the several details of it are wrought out with simple portraiture; the ivy, the jewels, the creeping plants, and the moonlight being calmly studied or remembered from the things themselves. But of all these special ways in which the invention works with plain facts, we shall have to treat farther afterwards.

§ 24. And now, finally, since this poetical power includes the historical, if we glance back to the other qualities required in great art, and put all together, we find that the sum of them is simply the sum of all the powers of man. For as (1) the choice of the high subject involves all conditions of right moral choice, and as (2) the love of beauty involves all conditions of right admiration, and as (3) the grasp of truth involves all strength of sense, evenness of judgment, and honesty of purpose, and as (4) the poetical power involves all swiftness of invention, and

accuracy of historical memory, the sum of all these powers is the sum of the human soul. Hence we see why the word "Great" is used of this art. It is literally great. It compasses and calls forth the entire human spirit, whereas any other kind of art, being more or less small or narrow, compasses and calls forth only *part* of the human spirit. Hence the idea of its magnitude is a literal and just one, the art being simply less or greater in proportion to the number of faculties it exercises and addresses.* And this is the ultimate meaning of the definition I gave of it long ago, as containing the "greatest number of the greatest ideas."

§ 25. Such, then, being the characters required in order to constitute high art, if the reader will think over them a little, and over the various ways in which they may be falsely assumed, he will easily perceive how spacious and dangerous a field of discussion they open to the ambitious critic, and of error to the ambitious artist; he will see how difficult it must be, either to distinguish what is truly great art from the mockeries of it, or to rank the real artists in any thing like a progressive system of greater and less. For it will have been observed that the various qualities which form greatness are partly inconsistent with each other (as some virtues are, docility and firmness for instance), and partly independent of each other; and the fact is, that artists differ not more by mere capacity, than by the component *elements* of their capacity, each possessing in very different proportions the several attributes of greatness; so that, classed by one kind of merit, as, for instance, purity of expression, Angelico will stand highest; classed by another, sincerity of manner, Veronese will stand highest; classed by another, love of beauty, Leonardo will stand highest; and so on; hence arise continual disputes and misunderstandings among those who think that high art must always be one and the same, and that great artists ought to unite all great attributes in an equal degree.

§ 26. In one of the exquisitely finished tales of Marmontel, a company of critics are received at dinner by the hero of the story, an old gentleman, somewhat vain of his *acquired* taste,

* Compare Stones of Venice, vol. iii. chap. iv. § 7, and § 21.

and his niece, by whose incorrigible *natural* taste, he is seriously disturbed and tormented. During the entertainment, "On parcourut tous les genres de littérature, et pour donner plus d'essor à l'érudition et à la critique, on mit sur le tapis cette question toute neuve, sçavoir, lequel méritoit la préférence de Corneille ou de Racine. L'on disoit même là-dessus les plus belles choses du monde, lorsque la petite nièce, qui n'avoit pas dit un mot, s'avisa de demander naïvement lequel des deux fruits, de l'orange ou de la pêche, avoit le goût les plus exquis et méritoit le plus d'éloges. Son oncle rougit de sa simplicité, et les convives baissèrent tous les yeux sans daigner répondre à cette bêtise. Ma nièce, dit Fintac, à votre âge, il faut sçavoir écouter, et se taire."

I cannot close this chapter with shorter or better advice to the reader, than merely, whenever he hears discussions about the relative merits of great masters, to remember the young lady's question. It is, indeed, true that there *is* a relative merit, that a peach is nobler than a hawthorn berry, and still more a hawthorn berry than a bead of the nightshade; but in each rank of fruits, as in each rank of masters, one is endowed with one virtue, and another with another; their glory is their dissimilarity, and they who propose to themselves in the training of an artist that he should unite the coloring of Tintoret, the finish of Albert Durer, and the tenderness of Correggio, are no wiser than a horticulturist would be, who made it the object of his labor to produce a fruit which should unite in itself the lusciousness of the grape, the crispness of the nut, and the fragrance of the pine.

§ 27. And from these considerations one most important practical corollary is to be deduced, with the good help of Mademoiselle's Agathe's simile, namely, that the greatness or smallness of a man is, in the most conclusive sense, determined for him at his birth, as strictly as it is determined for a fruit whether it is to be a currant or an apricot. Education, favorable circumstances, resolution, and industry can do much; in a certain sense they do *everything;* that is to say, they determine whether the poor apricot shall fall in the form of a green bead, blighted by an east wind, shall be trodden under foot, or whether it shall expand into tender pride, and sweet brightness

of golden velvet. But apricot out of currant,—great man out of small,—did never yet art or effort make; and, in a general way, men have their excellence nearly fixed for them when they are born; a little cramped and frost-bitten on one side, a little sun-burnt and fortune-spotted on the other, they reach, between good and evil chances, such size and taste as generally belong to the men of their calibre, and the small in their serviceable bunches, the great in their golden isolation, have, these no cause for regret, nor those for disdain.

§ 28. Therefore it is, that every system of teaching is false which holds forth "great art" as in any wise to be taught to students, or even to be aimed at by them. Great art is precisely that which never was, nor will be taught, it is pre-eminently and finally the expression of the spirits of great men; so that the only wholesome teaching is that which simply endeavors to fix those characters of nobleness in the pupil's mind, of which it seems easily susceptible; and without holding out to him, as a possible or even probable result, that he should ever paint like Titian, or carve like Michael Angelo, enforces upon him the manifest possibility, and assured duty, of endeavoring to draw in a manner at least honest and intelligible; and cultivates in him those general charities of heart, sincerities of thought, and graces of habit which are likely to lead him, throughout life, to prefer openness to affectation, realities to shadows, and beauty to corruption.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE FALSE IDEAL :—FIRST, RELIGIOUS.

§ 1. HAVING now gained some general notion of the meaning of "great art," we may, without risk of confusing ourselves, take up the questions suggested incidentally in the preceding chapter, and pursue them at leisure. Of these, two principal ones are closely connected with each other, to wit, that put in the 12th paragraph—How may beauty be sought in defiance of truth? and that in the 23rd paragraph—How does the imagination show itself in dealing with truth? These two, therefore, which are, besides, the most important of all, and, if well answered, will answer many others inclusively, we shall find it most convenient to deal with at once.

§ 2. The pursuit, by the imagination, of beautiful and strange thoughts or subjects, to the exclusion of painful or common ones, is called among us, in these modern days, the pursuit of "*the ideal;*" nor does any subject deserve more attentive examination than the manner in which this pursuit is entered upon by the modern mind. The reader must pardon me for making in the outset one or two statements which may appear to him somewhat wide of the matter, but which, (if he admits their truth,) he will, I think, presently perceive to reach to the root of it. Namely,

That men's proper business in this world falls mainly into three divisions :

First, to know themselves, and the existing state of the things they have to do with.

Secondly, to be happy in themselves, and in the existing state of things.

Thirdly, to mend themselves, and the existing state of things, as far as either are marred or mendable.

These, I say, are the three plain divisions of proper human

business on this earth. For these three, the following are usually substituted and adopted by human creatures:

First, to be totally ignorant of themselves, and the existing state of things.

Secondly, to be miserable in themselves, and in the existing state of things.

Thirdly, to let themselves, and the existing state of things, alone (at least in the way of correction).

§ 3. The dispositions which induce us to manage, thus wisely, the affairs of this life seem to be:

First, a fear of disagreeable facts, and conscious shrinking from clearness of light, which keep us from examining ourselves, and increase gradually into a species of instinctive terror at all truth, and love of glosses, veils, and decorative lies of every sort.

Secondly, a general readiness to take delight in anything past, future, far off, or somewhere else, rather than in things now, near, and here; leading us gradually to place our pleasure principally in the exercise of the imagination, and to build all our satisfaction on things as they are *not*. Which power being one not accorded to the lower animals, and having indeed, when disciplined, a very noble use, we pride ourselves upon it, whether disciplined or not, and pass our lives complacently, in substantial discontent, and visionary satisfaction.

§ 4. Now *nearly* all artistical and poetical seeking after the ideal is only one branch of this base habit—the abuse of the imagination, in allowing it to find its whole delight in the impossible and untrue; while the faithful pursuit of the ideal is an honest use of the imagination, giving full power and presence to the possible and true.

It is the difference between these two uses of it which we have to examine.

§ 5. And, first, consider what are the legitimate uses of the imagination, that is to say, of the power of perceiving, or conceiving with the mind, things which cannot be perceived by the senses.

Its first and noblest use is, to enable us to bring sensibly to our sight the things which are recorded as belonging to our future state, or as invisibly surrounding us in this. It is given

us, that we may imagine the cloud of witnesses in heaven and earth, and see, as if they were now present, the souls of the righteous waiting for us; that we may conceive the great army of the inhabitants of heaven, and discover among them those whom we most desire to be with for ever; that we may be able to vision forth the ministry of angels beside us, and see the chariots of fire on the mountains that gird us round; but above all, to call up the scenes and facts in which we are commanded to believe, and be present, as if in the body, at every recorded event of the history of the Redeemer. Its second and ordinary use is to empower us to traverse the scenes of all other history, and force the facts to become again visible, so as to make upon us the same impression which they would have made if we had witnessed them; and in the minor necessities of life, to enable us, out of any present good, to gather the utmost measure of enjoyment by investing it with happy associations, and, in any present evil, to lighten it, by summoning back the images of other hours; and, also, to give to all mental truths some visible type in allegory, simile, or personification, which shall more deeply enforce them; and, finally, when the mind is utterly outwearied, to refresh it with such innocent play as shall be most in harmony with the suggestive voices of natural things, permitting it to possess living companionship instead of silent beauty, and create for itself fairies in the grass and naiads in the wave.

§ 6. These being the uses of imagination, its abuses are either in creating, for mere pleasure, false images, where it is its *duty* to create true ones; or in turning what was intended for the mere refreshment of the heart into its daily food, and changing the innocent pastimes of an hour into the guilty occupation of a life.

Let us examine the principal forms of this misuse, one by one.

§ 7. First, then, the imagination is chiefly warped and dishonored by being allowed to create false images, where it is its duty to create true ones. And this most dangerously in matters of religion. For a long time, when art was in its infancy, it remained unexposed to this danger, because it could not, with any power, realize or create *any* thing. It consisted merely in simple outlines and pleasant colors; which were understood to

be nothing more than signs of the thing thought of, a sort of pictorial letter for it, no more pretending to represent it than the written characters of its name. Such art excited the imagination, while it pleased the eye. But it *asserted* nothing, for it could realize nothing. The reader glanced at it as a glittering symbol, and went on to form truer images for himself. This act of the mind may be still seen in daily operation in children, as they look at brightly colored pictures in their story-books. Such pictures neither deceive them nor satisfy them; they only set their own inventive powers to work in the directions required.

§ 8. But as soon as art obtained the power of realization, it obtained also that of *assertion*. As fast as the painter advanced in skill he gained also in credibility, and that which he perfectly represented was perfectly believed, or could be disbelieved only by an actual effort of the beholder to escape from the fascinating deception. What had been faintly declared, might be painlessly denied; but it was difficult to discredit things forcibly alleged; and representations, which had been innocent in discrepancy, became guilty in consistency.

§ 9. For instance, when in the thirteenth century, the nativity was habitually represented by such a symbol as that on the next page, fig. 1, there was not the smallest possibility that such a picture could disturb, in the mind of the reader of the New Testament, the simple meaning of the words "wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger." That this manger was typified by a trefoiled arch* would no more prevent his distinct understanding of the narrative, than the grotesque heads introduced above it would interfere with his firm comprehension of the words "ox" or "ass;" while if there were anything in the action of the principal figures suggestive of real feeling, that suggestion he would accept, together with the general pleasantness of the lines and colors in the decorative letter; but without having his faith in the unrepresented

* The curious inequality of this little trefoil is not a mistake; it is faithfully copied by the draughtsman from the MS. Perhaps the actual date of the illumination may be a year or two past the thirteenth century, i.e., 1300—1310: but it is quite characteristic of the thirteenth century treatment in the figures.

and actual scene obscured for a moment. But it was far otherwise, when Francia or Perugino, with exquisite power of representing the human form, and high knowledge of the mysteries of art, devoted all their skill to the delineation of an impossible scene; and painted, for their subjects of the Nativity, a beautiful and queenly lady, her dress embroidered with gold, and with a crown of jewels upon her hair, kneeling, on a floor of inlaid and precious marble, before a crowned child, laid under a portico of Lombardic* architecture; with a sweet, verdurous, and vivid landscape in the distance, full of winding rivers, village spires, and baronial towers.† It is quite true that the frank absurdity of the thought prevented its being received as a deliberate contradiction of the truths of Scripture; but it is no less certain, that the continual presentment to the mind of this beautiful and fully realized imagery more and more chilled its power of apprehending the real truth; and that when pictures of this description met the eye in

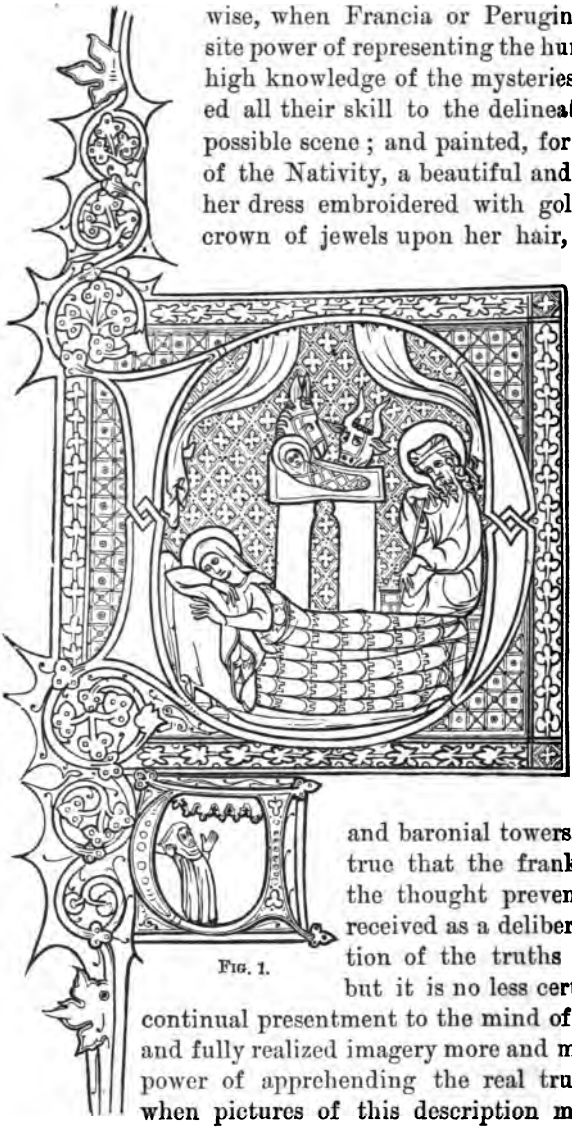


FIG. 1.

* Lombardic, i.e. in the style of Pietro and Tullio Lombardo, in the fifteenth century (not *Lombard*).

† All this, it will be observed, is that seeking for beauty at the cost of truth which we have generally noted in the last chapter.

every corner of every chapel, it was physically impossible to dwell distinctly upon facts the direct reverse of those represented. The word "Virgin" or "Madonna," instead of calling up the vision of a simple Jewish girl, bearing the calamities of poverty, and the dishonors of inferior station, summoned instantly the idea of a graceful princess, crowned with gems, and surrounded by obsequious ministry of kings and saints. The fallacy which was presented to the imagination was indeed discredited, but also the fact which was *not* presented to the imagination was forgotten; all true grounds of faith were gradually undermined, and the beholder was either enticed into mere luxury of fanciful enjoyment, believing nothing; or left, in his confusion of mind, the prey of vain tales and traditions; while in his best feelings he was unconsciously subject to the power of the fallacious picture, and with no sense of the real cause of his error, bowed himself, in prayer or adoration, to the lovely lady on her golden throne, when he would never have dreamed of doing so to the Jewish girl in her outcast poverty, or, in her simple household, to the carpenter's wife.

§ 10. But a shadow of increasing darkness fell upon the human mind as art proceeded to still more perfect realization. These fantasies of the earlier painters, though they darkened faith, never hardened *feeling;* on the contrary, the frankness of their unlikelihood proceeded mainly from the endeavor on the part of the painter to express, not the actual fact, but the enthusiastic state of his own feelings about the fact; he covers the Virgin's dress with gold, not with any idea of representing the Virgin as she ever was, or ever will be seen, but with a burning desire to show what his love and reverence would think fittest for her. He erects for the stable a Lombardic portico, not because he supposes the Lombardi to have built stables in Palestine in the days of Tiberius, but to show that the manger in which Christ was laid is, in his eyes, nobler than the greatest architecture in the world. He fills his landscape with church spires and silver streams, not because he supposes that either were in sight of Bethlehem, but to remind the beholder of the peaceful course and succeeding power of Christianity. And, regarded with due sympathy and clear understanding of these thoughts of the artist, such pictures remain most impressive and touching, even

to this day. I shall refer to them in future, in general terms, as the pictures of the "Angelican Ideal"—Angelico being the central master of the school.

§ 11. It was far otherwise in the next step of the Realistic progress. The greater his powers became, the more the mind of the painter was absorbed in their attainment, and complacent in their display. The early arts of laying on bright colors smoothly, of burnishing golden ornaments, or tracing, leaf by leaf, the outlines of flowers, were not so difficult as that they should materially occupy the thoughts of the artist, or furnish foundation for his conceit; he learned these rudiments of his work without pain, and employed them without pride, his spirit being left free to express, so far as it was capable of them, the reaches of higher thought. But when accurate shade, and subtle color, and perfect anatomy, and complicated perspective, became necessary to the work, the artist's whole energy was employed in learning the laws of these, and his whole pleasure consisted in exhibiting them. His life was devoted, not to the objects of art, but to the cunning of it; and the sciences of composition and light and shade were pursued as if there were abstract good in them;—as if, like astronomy or mathematics, they were ends in themselves, irrespective of anything to be effected by them. And without perception, on the part of any one, of the abyss to which all were hastening, a fatal change of aim took place throughout the whole world of art. In early times *art was employed for the display of religious facts;* now, *religious facts were employed for the display of art.* The transition, though imperceptible, was consummate; it involved the entire destiny of painting. It was passing from the paths of life to the paths of death.

§ 12. And this change was all the more fatal, because at first veiled by an appearance of greater dignity and sincerity than were possessed by the older art. One of the earliest results of the new knowledge was the putting away the greater part of the *unlikelihoods* and fineries of the ancient pictures, and an apparently closer following of nature and probability. All the fantasy which I have just been blaming as disturbant of the simplicity of faith, was first subdued,—then despised and cast aside. The appearances of nature were more closely followed in

everything; and the crowned Queen-Virgin of Perugino sank into a simple Italian mother in Raphael's Madonna of the Chair.

§ 13. Was not this, then, a healthy change? No. It *would* have been healthy if it had been effected with a pure motive, and the new truths would have been precious if they had been sought for truth's sake. But they were not sought for truth's sake, but for pride's; and truth which is sought for display may be just as harmful as truth which is spoken in malice. The glittering childishness of the old art was rejected, not because it was false, but because it was easy; and, still more, because the painter had no longer any religious passion to express. He could think of the Madonna now very calmly, with no desire to pour out the treasures of earth at her feet, or crown her brows with the golden shafts of heaven. He could think of her as an available subject for the display of transparent shadows, skilful tints, and scientific foreshortenings,—as a fair woman, forming, if well painted, a pleasant piece of furniture for the corner of a boudoir, and best imagined by combination of the beauties of the prettiest contadinas. He could think of her, in her last maternal agony, with academical discrimination; sketch in first her skeleton, invest her, in serene science, with the muscles of misery and the fibres of sorrow; then cast the grace of antique drapery over the nakedness of her desolation, and fulfil, with studious lustre of tears and delicately painted pallor, the perfect type of the "Mater Dolorosa."

§ 14. It was thus that Raphael thought of the Madonna.*

Now observe, when the subject was thus scientifically completed, it became necessary, as we have just said, to the full display of all the power of the artist, that it should in many respects be more faithfully imagined than it had been hitherto. "Keeping," "Expression," "Historical Unity," and such other requirements, were enforced on the painter, in the same tone, and with the same purpose, as the purity of his oil and the accuracy of his perspective. He was told that the figure of Christ should be "dignified," those of the Apostles "expressive," that of the Virgin "modest," and those of children "in-

* This is one form of the sacrifice of expression to technical merit, generally noted at the end of the 10th paragraph of the last chapter.

nocent." All this was perfectly true; and in obedience to such directions, the painter proceeded to manufacture certain arrangements of apostolic sublimity, virginal mildness, and infantine innocence, which, being free from the quaint imperfection and contradictoriness of the early art, were looked upon by the European public as true things, and trustworthy representations of the events of religious history. The pictures of Francia and Bellini had been received as pleasant visions. But the cartoons of Raphael were received as representations of historical fact.

§ 15. Now, neither they, nor any other work of the period, were representations either of historical or possible fact. They were, in the strictest sense of the word, "compositions"—cold arrangements of propriety and agreeableness, according to academical formulas; the painter never in any case making the slightest effort to conceive the thing as it must have happened, but only to gather together graceful lines and beautiful faces, in such compliance with commonplace ideas of the subject as might obtain for the whole an "epic unity," or some such other form of scholastic perfectness.

§ 16. Take a very important instance.

I suppose there is no event in the whole life of Christ to which, in hours of doubt or fear, men turn with more anxious thirst to know the close facts of it, or with more earnest and passionate dwelling upon every syllable of its recorded narrative, than Christ's showing Himself to his disciples at the lake of Galilee. There is something pre-eminently open, natural, full fronting our disbelief in this manifestation. The others, recorded after the resurrection, were sudden, phantom-like, occurring to men in profound sorrow and wearied agitation of heart; not, it might seem, safe judges of what they saw. But the agitation was now over. They had gone back to their daily work, thinking still their business lay net-wards, unmeshed from the literal rope and drag. "Simon Peter saith unto them, 'I go a fishing.' They say unto him, 'We also go with thee.'" True words enough, and having far echo beyond those Galilean hills. That night they caught nothing; but when the morning came, in the clear light of it, behold a figure stood on the shore. They were not thinking of anything but their fruit-

less hauls. They had no guess who it was. It asked them simply if they had caught anything. They said no. And it tells them to cast yet again. And John shades his eyes from the morning sun with his hand, to look who it is; and though the glinting of the sea, too, dazzles him, he makes out who it is, at last; and poor Simon, not to be outrun this time, tightens his fisher's coat about him, and dashes in, over the nets. One would have liked to see him swim those hundred yards, and stagger to his knees on the beach.

Well, the others get to the beach, too, in time, in such slow way as men in general do get, in this world, to its true shore, much impeded by that wonderful "dragging the net with fishes;" but they get there—seven of them in all;—first the Denier, and then the slowest believer, and then the quickest believer, and then the two throne-seekers, and two more, we know not who.

They sit down on the shore face to face with Him, and eat their broiled fish as He bids. And then, to Peter, all dripping still, shivering, and amazed, staring at Christ in the sun, on the other side of the coal fire,—thinking a little, perhaps, of what happened by another coal fire, when it was colder, and having had no word once changed with him by his Master since that look of His,—to him, so amazed, comes the question, "Simon, lovest thou me?" Try to feel that a little, and think of it till it is true to you; and then, take up that infinite monstrosity and hypocrisy—Raphael's cartoon of the Charge to Peter. Note, first, the bold fallacy—the putting *all* the Apostles there, a mere lie to serve the Papal heresy of the Petric supremacy, by putting them all in the background while Peter receives the charge, and making them all witnesses to it. Note the handsomely curled hair and neatly tied sandals of the men who had been out all night in the sea-mists and on the slimy decks. Note their convenient dresses for going a-fishing, with trains that lie a yard along the ground, and goodly fringes,—all made to match, an apostolic fishing costume.* Note how Peter especially (whose chief glory was in his wet coat *girt* about him

* I suppose Raphael intended a reference to Numbers xv. 38; but if he did, the *blue* riband, or "vitta," as it is in the Vulgate, should have been on the borders too.

and naked limbs) is enveloped in folds and fringes, so as to kneel and hold his keys with grace. No fire of coals at all, nor lonely mountain shore, but a pleasant Italian landscape, full of villas and churches, and a flock of sheep to be pointed at; and the whole group of Apostles, not round Christ, as they would have been naturally, but straggling away in a line, that they may all be shown.

The simple truth is, that the moment we look at the picture we feel our belief of the whole thing taken away. There is, visibly, no possibility of that group ever having existed, in any place, or on any occasion. It is all a mere mythic absurdity, and faded concoction of fringes, muscular arms, and curly heads of Greek philosophers.

§ 17. Now, the evil consequences of the acceptance of this kind of religious idealism for true, were instant and manifold. So far as it was received and trusted in by thoughtful persons, it only served to chill all the conceptions of sacred history which they might otherwise have obtained. Whatever they could have fancied for themselves about the wild, strange, infinitely stern, infinitely tender, infinitely varied veracities of the life of Christ, was blotted out by the vapid fineries of Raphael; the rough Galilean pilot, the orderly custom receiver, and all the questioning wonder and fire of uneducated apostleship, were obscured under an antique mask of philosophical faces and long robes. The feeble, subtle, suffering, ceaseless energy and humiliation of St. Paul were confused with an idea of a meditative Hercules leaning on a sweeping sword;* and the mighty presences of Moses and Elias were softened by introductions of delicate grace, adopted from dancing nymphs and rising Auroras.†

Now, no vigorously minded religious person could possibly

* In the St. Cecilia of Bologna.

† In the Transfiguration. Do but try to believe that Moses and Elias are really there talking with Christ. Moses in the loveliest heart and midst of the land which once it had been denied him to behold,—Elijah treading the earth again, from which he had been swept to heaven in fire; both now with a mightier message than ever they had given in life,—mightier, in closing their own mission,—mightier, in speaking to Christ "of His decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." They, men of like passions once with us, appointed to speak to the Redeemer of His death.

And, then, look at Raphael's kicking gracefulnesses.

receive pleasure or help from such art as this; and the necessary result was the instant rejection of it by the healthy religion of the world. Raphael ministered, with applause, to the impious luxury of the Vatican, but was trampled under foot at once by every believing and advancing Christian of his own and subsequent times; and thenceforward pure Christianity and "high art" took separate roads, and fared on, as best they might, independently of each other.

§ 18. But although Calvin, and Knox, and Luther, and their flocks, with all the hardest-headed and truest-hearted faithful left in Christendom, thus spurned away the spurious art, and all art with it, (not without harm to themselves, such as a man must needs sustain in cutting off a decayed limb*) certain conditions of weaker Christianity suffered the false system to retain influence over them; and to this day, the clear and tasteless poison of the art of Raphael infects with sleep of infidelity the hearts of millions of Christians. It is the first cause of all that pre-eminent *dulness* which characterizes what Protestants call sacred art; a dulness not merely baneful in making religion distasteful to the young, but in sickening, as we have seen, all vital belief of religion in the old. A dim sense of impossibility attaches itself always to the graceful emptiness of the representation; we feel instinctively that the painted Christ and painted apostle are not beings that ever did or could exist; and this fatal sense of fair fabulousness, and well-composed impossibility, steals gradually from the picture into the history, until we find ourselves reading St. Mark or St. Luke with the same admiring, but uninterested, incredulity, with which we contemplate Raphael.

§ 19. On a certain class of minds, however, these Raphaelesque and other sacred paintings of high order, have had, of late years, another kind of influence, much resembling that which they had at first on the most pious Romanists. They are used to excite certain conditions of religious dream or reverie; being again, as in earliest times, regarded not as representations of fact, but as expressions of sentiment respecting the fact. In

* Luther had no dislike of religious art on principle. Even the stove in his chamber was wrought with sacred subjects. See Mrs. Stowe's Sunny Memories.

this way the best of them have unquestionably much purifying and enchanting power; and they are helpful opponents to sinful passion and weakness of every kind. A fit of unjust anger, petty malice, unreasonable vexation, or dark passion, cannot certainly, in a mind of ordinary sensibility, hold its own in the presence of a good engraving from any work of Angelico, Memling, or Perugino. But I nevertheless believe, that he who trusts much to such helps will find them fail him at his need; and that the dependence, in any great degree, on the presence or power of a picture, indicates a wonderfully feeble sense of the presence and power of God. I do not think that any man, who is thoroughly certain that Christ is in the room, will care what sort of pictures of Christ he has on its walls; and, in the plurality of cases, the delight taken in art of this kind is, in reality, nothing more than a form of graceful indulgence of those sensibilities which the habits of a disciplined life restrain in other directions. Such art is, in a word, the opera and drama of the monk. Sometimes it is worse than this, and the love of it is the mask under which a general thirst for morbid excitement will pass itself for religion. The young lady who rises in the middle of the day, jaded by her last night's ball, and utterly incapable of any simple or wholesome religious exercise, can still gaze into the dark eyes of the Madonna di San Sisto, or dream over the whiteness of an ivory crucifix, and returns to the course of her daily life in full persuasion that her morning's feverishness has atoned for her evening's folly. And all the while, the art which possesses these very doubtful advantages is acting for undoubtful detriment, in the various ways above examined, on the inmost fastnesses of faith; it is throwing subtle endearments round foolish traditions, confusing sweet fancies with sound doctrines, obscuring real events with unlikely semblances, and enforcing false assertions with pleasant circumstantiality, until, to the usual, and assuredly sufficient, difficulties standing in the way of belief, its votaries have added a habit of sentimentally changing what they know to be true, and of dearly loving what they confess to be false.

§ 20. Has there, then (the reader asks emphatically), been *no* true religious ideal? Has religious art never been of any service to mankind? I fear, on the whole, not. Of true relig-

ious ideal, representing events historically recorded, with solemn effort at a sincere and unartificial conception, there exist, as yet, hardly any examples. Nearly all good religious pictures fall into one or other branch of the false ideal already examined, either into the Angelican (passionate ideal) or the Raphaelesque (philosophical ideal). But there is one true form of religious art, nevertheless, in the pictures of the passionate ideal which represent imaginary beings of another world. Since it is evidently right that we should try to imagine the glories of the next world, and as this imagination must be, in each separate mind, more or less different, and unconfined by any laws of material fact, the passionate ideal has not only full scope here, but it becomes our duty to urge its powers to its utmost, so that every condition of beautiful form and color may be employed to invest these scenes with greater delightfulness (the whole being, of course, received as an assertion of possibility, not of absolute fact). All the paradises imagined by the religious painters—the choirs of glorified saints, angels, and spiritual powers, when painted with full belief in this possibility of their existence, are true ideals; and so far from our having dwelt on these too much, I believe, rather, we have not trusted them enough, nor accepted them enough, as possible statements of most precious truth. Nothing but unmixed good can accrue to any mind from the contemplation of Orcagna's Last Judgment or his triumph of death, of Angelico's Last Judgment and Paradise, or any of the scenes laid in heaven by the other faithful religious masters; and the more they are considered, not as works of art, but as real visions of real things, more or less imperfectly set down, the more good will be got by dwelling upon them. The same is true of all representations of Christ as a living presence among us now, as in Hunt's Light of the World.

§ 21. For the rest, there is a reality of conception in some of the works of Benozzo Gozzoli, Ghirlandajo, and Giotto, which approaches to a true ideal, even of recorded facts. But the examination of the various degrees in which sacred art has reached its proper power is not to our present purpose; still less, to investigate the infinitely difficult question of its past operation on the Christian mind. I hope to prosecute my inquiry into this subject in another work; it being enough here

to mark the forms of ideal error, without historically tracing their extent, and to state generally that my impression is, up to the present moment, that the best religious art has been *hitherto* rather a fruit, and attendant sign, of sincere Christianity than a promoter of or help to it. More, I think, has always been done for God by few words than many pictures, and more by few acts than many words.

§ 22. I must not, however, quit the subject without insisting on the chief practical consequence of what we have observed, namely, that sacred art, so far from being exhausted, has yet to attain the development of its highest branches; and the task, or privilege, yet remains for mankind, to produce an art which shall be at once entirely skilful and entirely *sincere*. All the histories of the Bible are, in my judgment, yet waiting to be painted. Moses has never been painted; Elijah never; David never (except as a mere ruddy stripling); Deborah never; Gideon never; Isaiah never. What single example does the reader remember of painting which suggested so much as the faintest shadow of these people, or of their deeds? Strong men in armor, or aged men with flowing beards, he *may* remember, who, when he looked at his Louvre or Uffizii catalogue, he found were intended to stand for David or for Moses. But does he suppose that, if these pictures had suggested to him the feeblest image of the presence of such men, he would have passed on, as he assuredly did, to the next picture,—representing, doubtless, Diana and Actæon, or Cupid and the Graces, or a gambling quarrel in a pothouse,—with no sense of pain, or surprise? Let him meditate over the matter, and he will find ultimately that what I say is true, and that religious art, at once complete and sincere, never yet has existed.

§ 23. It will exist: nay, I believe the era of its birth has come, and that those bright Turnerian imageries, which the European public declared to be "dotage," and those calm Pre-Raphaelite studies which, in like manner, it pronounced "puerility," form the first foundation that has been ever laid for true sacred art. Of this we shall presently reason farther. But, be it as it may, if we would cherish the hope that sacred art may, indeed, arise for *us*, two separate cautions are to be addressed to the two opposed classes of religionists whose influence will

chiefly retard that hope's accomplishment. The group calling themselves Evangelical ought no longer to render their religion an offence to men of the world by associating it only with the most vulgar forms of art. It is not necessary that they should admit either music or painting into religious service; but, if they admit either the one or the other, let it not be bad music nor bad painting: it is certainly in nowise more for Christ's honor that His praise should be sung discordantly, or His miracles painted discreditably, than that His word should be preached ungrammatically. Some Evangelicals, however, seem to take a morbid pride in the triple degradation.*

§ 24. The opposite class of men, whose natural instincts lead them to mingle the refinements of art with all the offices and practices of religion, are to be warned, on the contrary, how they mistake their enjoyments for their duties, or confound poetry with faith. I admit that it is impossible for one man to judge another in this matter, and that it can never be said with certainty how far what seems frivolity may be force, and what seems the indulgence of the heart may be, indeed, its dedication. I am ready to believe that Metastasio, expiring in a canzonet, may have died better than if his prayer had been in unmeasured syllables.† But, for the most part, it is assuredly

* I do not know anything more humiliating to a man of common sense, than to open what is called an "illustrated Bible" of modern days. See, for instance, the plates in Brown's Bible (octavo: Edinburgh, 1840), a standard evangelical edition. Our habit of reducing the psalms to doggrel before we will condescend to sing them, is a parallel abuse. It is marvellous to think that human creatures with tongues and souls should refuse to chant the verse: "Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up thy strength, and come and help us;" preferring this:—

'Behold, how Benjamin expects,
With Ephraim and Manasseh joined,
In their deliverance, the effects
Of thy resistless strength to find!"

† "En 1780, âgé de quatre-vingt-deux ans, au moment de recevoir le viatique, il rassembla ses forces, et chanta, à son Créateur:

Eterno Genitor
Io t' offro il proprio figlio
Che in pegno del tuo amor
Si vuole a me donar.

much to be feared lest we mistake a surrender to the charms of art for one to the service of God; and, in the art which we permit, lest we substitute sentiment for sense, grace for utility. And for us all there is in this matter even a deeper danger than that of indulgence. There is the danger of Artistical Pharisaism. Of all the forms of pride and vanity, as there are none more subtle, so I believe there are none more sinful, than those which are manifested by the Pharisees of art. To be proud of birth, of place, of wit, of bodily beauty, is comparatively innocent, just because such pride is more natural, and more easily detected. But to be proud of our sanctities; to pour contempt upon our fellows, because, forsooth, we like to look at Madonnas in bowers of roses, better than at plain pictures of plain things; and to make this religious art of ours the expression of our own perpetual self-complacency,—congratulating ourselves, day by day, on our purities, proprieties, elevations, and inspirations, as above the reach of common mortals,—this I believe to be one of the wickedest and foolishest forms of human egotism; and, truly, I had rather, with great, thoughtless, humble Paul Veronese, make the Supper at Emmaus a background for two children playing with a dog (as, God knows, men do usually put it in the background to everything, if not out of sight altogether), than join that school of modern Germanism which wears its pieties for decoration as women wear their diamonds, and flaunts the dry fleeces of its phylacteries between its dust and the dew of heaven.

A lui rivolgi il ciglio,
Mira chi t' offro; e poi,
Niega, Signor, se puoi,
Niega di perdonar.' "—

—DE STENDHAL, *Vie de Metastasio.*

CHAPTER V.

OF THE FALSE IDEAL:—SECONDLY, PROFANE.

§ 1. SUCH having been the effects of the pursuit of ideal beauty on the religious mind of Europe, we might be tempted next to consider in what way the same movement affected the art which concerned itself with profane subject, and, through that art, the whole temper of modern civilization.

I shall, however, merely glance at this question. It is a very painful and a very wide one. Its discussion cannot come properly within the limits, or even within the aim, of a work like this; it ought to be made the subject of a separate essay, and that essay should be written by some one who had passed less of his life than I have among the mountains, and more of it among men. But one or two points may be suggested for the reader to reflect upon at his leisure.

§ 2. I said just now that we might be tempted to consider how this pursuit of the ideal *affected* profane art. Strictly speaking, it brought that art into existence. As long as men sought for truth first, and beauty secondarily, they cared chiefly, of course, for the *chief* truth, and all art was instinctively religious. But as soon as they sought for beauty first, and truth secondarily, they were punished by losing sight of spiritual truth altogether, and the profane (properly so called) schools of art were instantly developed.

The perfect human beauty, which, to a large part of the community, was by far the most interesting feature in the work of the rising school, might indeed be in some degree consistent with the agony of Madonnas, and the repentance of Magdalenes; but could not be exhibited in fulness, when the subjects, however irreverently treated, nevertheless demanded some decency in the artist, and some gravity in the spectator. The newly acquired powers of rounding limbs, and tinting lips, had

too little scope in the sanctities even of the softest womanhood; and the newly acquired conceptions of the nobility of nakedness could in no wise be expressed beneath the robes of the prelate or the sackcloth of the recluse. But the source from which these ideas had been received afforded also full field for their expression; the heathen mythology, which had furnished the examples of these heights of art, might again become the subject of the inspirations it had kindled;—with the additional advantage that it could now be delighted in, without being believed; that its errors might be indulged, unrepressed by its awe; and those of its deities whose function was temptation might be worshipped, in scorn of those whose hands were charged with chastisement.

So, at least, men dreamed in their foolishness,—to find, as the ages wore on, that the returning Apollo bore not only his lyre, but his arrows; and that at the instant of Cytherea's resurrection to the sunshine, Persephone had reascended her throne in the deep.

§ 3. Little thinking this, they gave themselves up fearlessly to the chase of the new delight, and exhausted themselves in the pursuit of an ideal now doubly false. Formerly, though they attempted to reach an unnatural beauty, it was yet in representing historical facts and real persons; *now* they sought for the same unnatural beauty in representing tales which they knew to be fictitious, and personages who they knew had never existed. Such a state of things had never before been found in any nation. Every people till then had painted the acts of their kings, the triumphs of their armies, the beauty of their race, or the glory of their gods. They showed the things they had seen or done; the beings they truly loved or faithfully adored. But the ideal art of modern Europe was the shadow of a shadow; and with mechanism substituted for perception, and bodily beauty for spiritual life, it set itself to represent men it had never seen, customs it had never practised, and gods in whom it had never believed.

§ 4. Such art could of course have no help from the virtues, nor claim on the energies of men. It necessarily rooted itself in their vices and their idleness; and of their vices principally in two, pride and sensuality. To the pride, was attached emi-

nently the art of architecture; to the sensuality, those of painting and sculpture. Of the fall of architecture, as resultant from the formalist pride of its patrons and designers, I have spoken elsewhere. The sensualist ideal, as seen in painting and sculpture, remains to be examined here. But one interesting circumstance is to be observed with respect to the manner of the separation of these arts. Pride, being wholly a vice, and in every phase inexcusable, wholly betrayed and destroyed the art which was founded on it. But passion, having some root and use in healthy nature, and only becoming guilty in excess, did not altogether destroy the art founded upon it. The architecture of Palladio is wholly virtueless and despicable. Not so the Venus of Titian, nor the Antiope of Correggio.

§ 5. We find, then, at the close of the sixteenth century, the arts of painting and sculpture wholly devoted to entertain the indolent and satiate the luxurious. To effect these noble ends, they took a thousand different forms; painting, however, of course being the most complying, aiming sometimes at mere amusement by deception in landscapes, or minute imitation of natural objects; sometimes giving more piquant excitement in battle-pieces full of slaughter, or revels deep in drunkenness; sometimes entering upon serious subjects, for the sake of grotesque fiends and picturesque infernos, or that it might introduce pretty children as cherubs, and handsome women as Magdalenes and Maries of Egypt, or portraits of patrons in the character of the more decorous saints: but more frequently, for direct flatteries of this kind, recurring to Pagan mythology, and painting frail ladies as goddesses or graces, and foolish kings in radiant apotheosis; while, for the earthly delight of the persons whom it honored as divine, it ransacked the records of luscious fable, and brought back, in fullest depth of dye and flame of fancy, the impurest dreams of the un-Christian ages.

§ 6. Meanwhile, the art of sculpture, less capable of ministering to mere amusement, was more or less reserved for the affectations of taste; and the study of the classical statues introduced various ideas on the subjects of "purity," "chastity," and "dignity," such as it was possible for people to entertain who were themselves impure, luxurious, and ridiculous. It is a matter of extreme difficulty to explain the exact

character of this modern sculpturesque ideal; but its relation to the true ideal may be best understood by considering it as in exact parallelism with the relation of the word "taste" to the word "love." Wherever the word "taste" is used with respect to matters of art, it indicates either that the thing spoken of belongs to some inferior class of objects, or that the person speaking has a false conception of its nature. For, consider the exact sense in which a work of art is said to be "in good or bad taste." It does not mean that it is true, or false; that it is beautiful, or ugly; but that it does or does not comply either with the laws of choice, which are enforced by certain modes of life; or the habits of mind produced by a particular sort of education. It does not mean merely fashionable, that is, complying with a momentary caprice of the upper classes; but it means agreeing with the habitual sense which the most refined education, common to those upper classes at the period, gives to their whole mind. Now, therefore, so far as that education does indeed tend to make the senses delicate, and the perceptions accurate, and thus enables people to be pleased with quiet instead of gaudy color, and with graceful instead of coarse form; and, by long acquaintance with the best things, to discern quickly what is fine from what is common;—so far, acquired taste is an honorable faculty, and it is true praise of anything to say it is "in good taste." But so far as this higher education has a tendency to narrow the sympathies and harden the heart, diminishing the interest of all beautiful things by familiarity, until even what is best can hardly please, and what is brightest hardly entertain;—so far as it fosters pride, and leads men to found the pleasure they take in anything, not on the worthiness of the thing, but on the degree in which it indicates some greatness of their own (as people build marble porticos, and inlay marble floors, not so much because they like the colors of marble, or find it pleasant to the foot, as because such porches and floors are costly, and separated in all human eyes from plain entrances of stone and timber);—so far as it leads people to prefer gracefulness of dress, manner, and aspect, to value of substance and heart, liking a well *said* thing better than a true thing, and a well trained manner better than a sincere one, and a delicately formed face better than a good-

natured one, and in all other ways and things setting custom and semblance above everlasting truth ;—so far, finally, as it induces a sense of inherent distinction between class and class, and causes everything to be more or less despised which has no social rank, so that the affection, pleasure, or grief of a clown are looked upon as of no interest compared with the affection and grief of a well-bred man ;—just so far, in all these several ways, the feeling induced by what is called a "liberal education" is utterly adverse to the understanding of noble art ; and the name which is given to the feeling,—Taste, Goût, Gusto,—in all languages, indicates the baseness of it, for it implies that art gives only a kind of pleasure analogous to that derived from eating by the palate.

§ 7. Modern education, not in art only, but in all other things referable to the same standard, has invariably given taste in this bad sense ; it has given fastidiousness of choice without judgment, superciliousness of manner without dignity, refinement of habit without purity, grace of expression without sincerity, and desire of loveliness without love ; and the modern "Ideal" of high art is a curious mingling of the gracefulness and reserve of the drawingroom with a certain measure of classical sensuality. Of this last element, and the singular artifices by which vice succeeds in combining it with what appears to be pure and severe, it would take us long to reason fully ; I would rather leave the reader to follow out for himself the consideration of the influence, in this direction, of statues, bronzes, and paintings, as at present employed by the upper circles of London, and (especially) Paris ; and this not so much in the works which are really fine, as in the multiplied coarse copies of them ; taking the widest range, from Dannaeker's Ariadne down to the amorous shepherd and shepherdess in china on the drawingroom time-piece, rigidly questioning, in each case, how far the charm of the art does indeed depend on some appeal to the inferior passions. Let it be considered, for instance, exactly how far the value of a picture of a girl's head by Greuze would be lowered in the market, if the dress, which now leaves the bosom bare, were raised to the neck ; and how far, in the commonest lithograph of some utterly popular subject,—for instance, the teaching of Uncle Tom by Eva,—the

sentiment which is supposed to be excited by the exhibition of Christianity in youth is complicated with that which depends upon Eva's having a dainty foot and a well-made satin slipper; —and then, having completely determined for himself how far the element exists, consider farther, whether, when art is thus frequent (for frequent he will assuredly find it to be) in its appeal to the lower passions, it is likely to attain the highest order of merit, or be judged by the truest standards of judgment. For, of all the causes which have combined, in modern times, to lower the rank of art, I believe this to be one of the most fatal; while, reciprocally, it may be questioned how far society suffers, in its turn, from the influences possessed over it by the arts it has degraded. It seems to me a subject of the very deepest interest to determine what has been the effect upon the European nations of the great change by which art became again capable of ministering delicately to the lower passions, as it had in the worst days of Rome; how far, indeed, in all ages, the fall of nations may be attributed to art's arriving at this particular stage among them. I do not mean that, in any of its stages, it is incapable of being employed for evil, but that assuredly an Egyptian, Spartan, or Norman was unexposed to the kind of temptation which is continually offered by the delicate painting and sculpture of modern days; and, although the diseased imagination might complete the imperfect image of beauty from the colored image on the wall,* or the most revolting thoughts be suggested by the mocking barbarism of the Gothic sculpture, their hard outline and rude execution were free from all the subtle treachery which now fills the flushed canvas and the rounded marble.

§ 8. I cannot, however, pursue this inquiry here. For our present purpose it is enough to note that the feeling, in itself so debased, branches upwards into that of which, while no one has cause to be ashamed, no one, on the other hand, has cause to be proud, namely, the admiration of physical beauty in the human form, as distinguished from expression of character. Every one can easily appreciate the merit of regular features and well-formed limbs, but it requires some attention, sympathy, and

* Ezek. xxiii. 14.

sense, to detect the charm of passing expression, or life-disciplined character. The beauty of the Apollo Belvidere, or Venus de Medicis, is perfectly palpable to any shallow fine lady or fine gentleman, though they would have perceived none in the face of an old weather-beaten St. Peter, or a grey-haired "Grandmother Lois." The knowledge that long study is necessary to produce these regular types of the human form renders the facile admiration matter of eager self-complacency; the shallow spectator, delighted that he can really, and without hypocrisy, admire what required much thought to produce, supposes himself endowed with the highest critical faculties, and easily lets himself be carried into rhapsodies about the "ideal," which, when all is said, if they be accurately examined, will be found literally to mean nothing more than that the figure has got handsome calves to its legs, and a straight nose.

§ 9. That they do mean, in reality, nothing more than this may be easily ascertained by watching the taste of the same persons in other things. The fashionable lady who will write five or six pages in her diary respecting the effect upon her mind of such and such an "ideal" in marble, will have her drawing-room table covered with Books of Beauty, in which the engravings represent the human form in every possible aspect of distortion and affectation; and the connoisseur who, in the morning, pretends to the most exquisite taste in the antique, will be seen, in the evening, in his opera-stall, applauding the least graceful gestures of the least modest figurante.

§ 10. But even this vulgar pursuit of physical beauty (vulgar in the profoundest sense, for there is no vulgarity like the vulgarity of education) would be less contemptible if it really succeeded in its object; but, like all pursuits carried to inordinate length, it defeats itself. Physical beauty *is* a noble thing when it is seen in perfectness; but the manner in which the moderns pursue their ideal prevents their ever really seeing what they are always seeking; for, requiring that all forms should be regular and faultless, they permit, or even compel, their painters and sculptors to work chiefly by rule, altering their models to fit their preconceived notions of what is right. When such artists look at a face, they do not give it the attention necessary to discern what beauty is already in its peculiar features; but

only to see how best it may be altered into something for which they have themselves laid down the laws. Nature never unveils her beauty to such a gaze. She keeps whatever she has done best, close sealed, until it is regarded with reverence. To the painter who honors her, she will open a revelation in the face of a street mendicant; but in the work of the painter who alters her, she will make Portia become ignoble and Perdita graceless.

§ 11. Nor is the effect less for evil on the mind of the general observer. The lover of ideal beauty, with all his conceptions narrowed by rule, never looks carefully enough upon the features which do not come under his law (or any others), to discern the inner beauty in them. The strange intricacies about the lines of the lips, and marvellous shadows and watch-fires of the eye, and wavering traceries of the eyelash, and infinite modulations of the brow, wherein high humanity is embodied, are all invisible to him. He finds himself driven back at last, with all his idealism, to the lionne of the ball-room, whom youth and passion can as easily distinguish as his utmost critical science; whereas, the observer who has accustomed himself to take human faces as God made them, will often find as much beauty on a village green as in the proudest room of state, and as much in the free seats of a church aisle, as in all the sacred paintings of the Vatican or the Pitti.

§ 12. Then, farther, the habit of disdaining ordinary truth, and seeking to alter it so as to fit the fancy of the beholder, gradually infects the mind in all its other operation; so that it begins to propose to itself an ideal in history, an ideal in general narration, an ideal in portraiture and description, and in every thing else where truth may be painful or uninteresting; with the necessary result of more or less weakness, wickedness, and uselessness in all that is done or said, with the desire of concealing this painful truth. And, finally, even when truth is not intentionally concealed, the pursuer of idealism will pass his days in false and useless trains of thought, pluming himself, all the while, upon his superiority therein to the rest of mankind. A modern German, without either invention or sense, seeing a rapid in a river, will immediately devote the remainder of the day to the composition of dialogues between amorous water nymphs and unhappy mariners; while the man of true inven-

tion, power, and sense will, instead, set himself to consider whether the rocks in the river could have their points knocked off, or the boats upon it be made with stronger bottoms.

§ 13. Of this final baseness of the false ideal, its miserable waste of time, strength, and available intellect of man, by turning, as I have said above, innocence of pastime into seriousness of occupation, it is, of course, hardly possible to sketch out even so much as the leading manifestations. The vain and haughty projects of youth for future life; the giddy reveries of insatiable self exaltation; the discontented dreams of what might have been or should be, instead of the thankful understanding of what is; the casting about for sources of interest in senseless fiction, instead of the real human histories of the people round us; the prolongation from age to age of romantic historical deceptions instead of sifted truth; the pleasures taken in fanciful portraits of rural or romantic life in poetry and on the stage, without the smallest effort to rescue the living rural population of the world from its ignorance or misery; the excitement of the feelings by labored imagination of spirits, fairies, monsters, and demons, issuing in total blindness of heart and sight to the true presences of beneficent or destructive spiritual powers around us; in fine, the constant abandonment of all the straightforward paths of sense and duty, for fear of losing some of the enticement of ghostly joys, or trampling somewhat "sopra lor vanità, che par persona;" all these various forms of false idealism have so entangled the modern mind, often called, I suppose ironically, practical, that truly I believe there never yet was idolatry of stock or staff so utterly unholy as this our idolatry of shadows; nor can I think that, of those who burnt incense under oaks, and poplars, and elms, because "the shadow thereof was good," it could in any wise be more justly or sternly declared than of us—"The wind hath bound them up in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices." *

* Hosea, chap. iv. 12, 13, and 19.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE TRUE IDEAL :—FIRST, PURIST.

§ 1. HAVING thus glanced at the principal modes in which the imagination works for evil, we must rapidly note also the principal directions in which its operation is admissible, even in changing or strangely combining what is brought within its sphere.

For hitherto we have spoken as if every change wilfully wrought by the imagination was an error; apparently implying that its only proper work was to summon up the memories of past events, and the anticipations of future ones, under aspects which would bear the sternest tests of historical investigation, or abstract reasoning. And in general this is, indeed, its noblest work. Nevertheless, it has also permissible functions peculiarly its own, and certain rights of feigning, and adorning, and fancifully arranging, inalienable from its nature. Everything that is natural is, within certain limits, right; and we must take care not, in over-severity, to deprive ourselves of any refreshing or animating power ordained to be in us for our help.

§ 2. (A). It was noted in speaking above of the Angelican or passionate ideal, that there was a certain virtue in it dependent on the expression of its loving enthusiasm. (Chap. IV. § 10.)

(B). In speaking of the pursuit of beauty as one of the characteristics of the highest art, it was also said that there were certain ways of shewing this beauty by gathering together, without altering, the finest forms, and marking them by gentle emphasis. (Chap. III. § 15.)

(C). And in speaking of the true uses of imagination it was said, that we might be allowed to create for ourselves, in innocent play, fairies and naiads, and other such fictitious creatures. (Chap. IV. § 5.)

Now this loving enthusiasm, which seeks for a beauty fit to be the object of eternal love; this inventive skill, which kindly displays what exists around us in the world; and this playful energy of thought which delights in various conditions of the impossible, are three forms of idealism more or less connected with the three tendencies of the artistical mind which I had occasion to explain in the chapter on the Nature of Gothic, in the Stones of Venice. It was there pointed out, that, the things around us containing mixed good and evil, certain men chose the good and left the evil (thence properly called Purists); others received both good and evil together (thence properly called Naturalists); and others had a tendency to choose the evil and leave the good, whom, for convenience' sake, I termed Sensualists. I do not mean to say that painters of fairies and naiads must belong to this last and lowest class, or habitually choose the evil and leave the good; but there is, nevertheless, a strange connection between the reinless play of the imagination, and a sense of the presence of evil, which is usually more or less developed in those creations of the imagination to which we properly attach the word *Grotesque*.

For this reason, we shall find it convenient to arrange what we have to note respecting true idealism under the three heads—

A. Purist Idealism.
B. Naturalist Idealism.
C. Grotesque Idealism.

§ 3. A. Purist Idealism.—It results from the unwillingness of men whose dispositions are more than ordinarily tender and holy, to contemplate the various forms of definite evil which necessarily occur in the daily aspects of the world around them. They shrink from them as from pollution, and endeavor to create for themselves an imaginary state, in which pain and imperfection either do not exist, or exist in some edgeless and enfeebled condition.

As, however, pain and imperfection are, by eternal laws, bound up with existence, so far as it is visible to us, the endeavor to cast them away invariably indicates a comparative childishness of mind, and produces a childish form of art. In general, the effort is most successful when it is most naïve, and

when the ignorance of the draughtsman is in some frank proportion to his innocence. For instance, one of the modes of treatment, the most conducive to this ideal expression, is simply drawing everything without shadows, as if the sun were everywhere at once. This, in the present state of our knowledge, we could not do with grace, because we could not do it without fear or shame. But an artist of the thirteenth century did it with no disturbance of conscience,—knowing no better, or rather, in some sense, we might say, knowing no worse. It is, however, evident, at first thought, that all representations of nature without evil must either be ideals of a future world, or be false ideals, if they are understood to be representations of facts. They can only be classed among the branches of the true ideal, in so far as they are understood to be nothing more than expressions of the painter's personal affections or hopes.

§ 4. Let us take one or two instances in order clearly to explain our meaning.

The life of Angelico was almost entirely spent in the endeavor to imagine the beings belonging to another world. By purity of life, habitual elevation of thought, and natural sweetness of disposition, he was enabled to express the sacred affections upon the human countenance as no one ever did before or since. In order to effect clearer distinction between heavenly beings and those of this world, he represents the former as clothed in draperies of the purest color, crowned with glories of burnished gold, and entirely shadowless. With exquisite choice of gesture, and disposition of folds of drapery, this mode of treatment gives perhaps the best idea of spiritual beings which the human mind is capable of forming. It is, therefore, a true ideal ;* but the mode in which it is arrived at (being so far mechanical and contradictory of the appearances of nature) necessarily precludes those who practise it from being complete masters of their art. It is always childish, but beautiful in its childishness.

§ 5. The works of our own Stothard are examples of the operation of another mind, singular in gentleness and purity, upon mere worldly subject. It seems as if Stothard could not

* As noted above in Chap. IV. § 20.

conceive wickedness, coarseness, or baseness; every one of his figures looks as if it had been copied from some creature who had never harbored an unkind thought, or permitted itself in an ignoble action. With this immense love of mental purity is joined, in Stothard, a love of mere physical smoothness and softness, so that he lived in a universe of soft grass and stainless fountains, tender trees, and stones at which no foot could stumble.

All this is very beautiful, and may sometimes urge us to an endeavor to make the world itself more like the conception of the painter. At least, in the midst of its malice, misery, and baseness, it is often a relief to glance at the graceful shadows, and take, for momentary companionship, creatures full only of love, gladness, and honor. But the perfect truth will at last vindicate itself against the partial truth; the help which we can gain from the unsubstantial vision will be only like that which we may sometimes receive, in weariness, from the scent of a flower or the passing of a breeze. For all firm aid and steady use, we must look to harder realities; and, as far as the painter himself is regarded, we can only receive such work as the sign of an amiable imbecility. It is indeed ideal; but ideal as a fair dream is in the dawn of morning, before the faculties are astir. The apparent completeness of grace can never be attained without much definite falsification as well as omission; stones, over which we cannot stumble, must be ill-drawn stones; trees, which are all gentleness and softness, cannot be trees of wood; nor companies without evil in them, companies of flesh and blood. The habit of falsification (with whatever aim) begins always in dulness and ends always in incapacity; nothing can be more pitiable than any endeavor by Stothard to express facts beyond his own sphere of soft pathos or graceful mirth, and nothing more unwise than the aim at a similar ideality by any painter who has power to render a sincerer truth.

§ 6. I remember another interesting example of ideality on this same root, but belonging to another branch of it, in the works of a young German painter, which I saw some time ago in a London drawingroom. He had been travelling in Italy, and had brought home a portfolio of sketches remarkable alike

for their fidelity and purity. Every one was a laborious and accurate study of some particular spot. Every cottage, every cliff, every tree, at the site chosen, had been drawn; and drawn with palpable sincerity of portraiture, and yet in such a spirit that it was impossible to conceive that any sin or misery had ever entered into one of the scenes he had represented; and the volcanic horrors of Radicofani, the pestilent gloom of the Pontines, and the boundless despondency of the Campagna became under his hand, only various appearances of Paradise.

It was very interesting to observe the minute emendations or omissions by which this was effected. To set the tiles the slightest degree more in order upon a cottage roof; to insist upon the vineleaves at the window, and let the shadow which fell from them naturally conceal the rent in the wall; to draw all the flowers in the foreground, and miss the weeds; to draw all the folds of the white clouds, and miss those of the black ones; to mark the graceful branches of the trees, and, in one way or another, beguile the eye from those which were ungainly; to give every peasant-girl whose face was visible the expression of an angel, and every one whose back was turned the bearing of a princess; finally, to give a general look of light, clear organization, and serene vitality to every feature in the landscape;—such were his artifices, and such his delights. It was impossible not to sympathize deeply with the spirit of such a painter; and it was just cause for gratitude to be permitted to travel, as it were, through Italy with such a friend. But his work had, nevertheless, its stern limitations and marks of everlasting inferiority. Always soothing and pathetic, it could never be sublime, never perfectly nor entrancingly beautiful; for the narrow spirit of correction could not cast itself fully into any scene; the calm cheerfulness which shrank from the shadow of the cypress, and the distortion of the olive, could not enter into the brightness of the sky that they pierced, nor the softness of the bloom that they bore: for every sorrow that his heart turned from, he lost a consolation; for every fear which he dared not confront, he lost a portion of his hardiness; the unsceptred sweep of the storm-clouds, the fair freedom of glancing shower and flickering sunbeam, sank into sweet rectitudes and decent formalisms; and, before eyes that refused to be dazzled or darkened, the hours of sunset wreathed their rays un-

heeded, and the mists of the Apennines spread their blue veils in vain.

§ 7. To this inherent shortcoming and narrowness of reach the farther defect was added, that this work gave no useful representation of the state of facts in the country which it pretended to contemplate. It was not only wanting in all the higher elements of beauty, but wholly unavailable for instruction of any kind beyond that which exists in pleasurableness of pure emotion. And considering what cost of labor was devoted to the series of drawings, it could not but be matter for grave blame, as well as for partial contempt, that a man of amiable feeling and considerable intellectual power should thus expend his life in the declaration of his own petty pieties and pleasant reveries, leaving the burden of human sorrow unwitnessed; and the power of God's judgments unconfessed; and, while poor Italy lay wounded and moaning at his feet, pass by, in priestly calm, lest the whiteness of his decent vesture should be spotted with unhallowed blood.

§ 8. Of several other forms of Purism I shall have to speak hereafter, more especially of that exhibited in the landscapes of the early religious painters; but these examples are enough, for the present, to show the general principle that the purest ideal, though in some measure true, in so far as it springs from the true longings of an earnest mind, is yet necessarily in many things deficient or blamable, and *always* an indication of some degree of weakness in the mind pursuing it. But, on the other hand, it is to be noted that entire scorn of this purist ideal is the sign of a far greater weakness. Multitudes of petty artists, incapable of any noble sensation whatever, but acquainted, in a dim way, with the technicalities of the schools, mock at the art whose depths they cannot fathom, and whose motives they cannot comprehend, but of which they can easily detect the imperfections, and deride the simplicities. Thus poor fumigatory Fuseli, with an art composed of the tinsel of the stage and the panics of the nursery, speaks contemptuously of the name of Angelico as "dearer to sanctity than to art." And a large portion of the resistance to the noble Pre-Raphaelite movement of our own days has been offered by men who suppose the entire function of the artist in this world to consist in laying on color with a large brush, and surrounding dashes of flake

white with bituminous brown; men whose entire capacities of brain, soul, and sympathy, applied industriously to the end of their lives, would not enable them, at last, to paint so much as one of the leaves of the nettles at the bottom of Hunt's picture of the Light of the World.*

§ 9. It is finally to be remembered, therefore, that Purism is always noble when it is *instinctive*. It is not the greatest thing that can be done, but it is probably the greatest thing that the man who does it can do, provided it comes from his heart. True, it is a sign of weakness, but it is not in our choice whether we will be weak or strong; and there is a certain strength which can only be made perfect in weakness. If he is working in humility, fear of evil, desire of beauty, and sincere purity of purpose and thought, he will produce good and helpful things; but he must be much on his guard against supposing himself to be greater than his fellows, because he has shut himself into this calm and cloistered sphere. His only safety lies in knowing himself to be, on the contrary, *less* than his fellows, and in always striving, so far as he can find it in his heart, to extend his delicate narrowness towards the great naturalist ideal. The whole group of modern German purists have lost themselves, because they founded their work not on humility, nor on religion, but on small self-conceit. Incapable of understanding the great Venetians, or any other masters of true imaginative power, and having fed what mind they had with weak poetry and false philosophy, they thought themselves the best and greatest of artistic mankind, and expected to found a new school of painting in pious plagiarism and delicate pride. It is difficult at first to decide which is the more worthless, the spiritual affectation of the petty German, or the composition and chiaroscuro of the petty Englishman; on the whole, however, the latter have lightest weight, for the pseudo-religious painter must, at all events, pass much of his time in meditation upon solemn subjects, and in examining venerable models; and may sometimes even cast a little useful reflected light, or touch the heart with a pleasant echo.

* Not that the Pre-Raphaelite is a purist movement, it is stern naturalist; but its unfortunate opposers, who neither know what nature is, nor what purism is, have mistaken the simple nature for morbid purism, and therefore cried out against it.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE TRUE IDEAL:—SECONDLY, NATURALIST.

§ 1. We now enter on the consideration of that central and highest branch of ideal art which concerns itself simply with things as they ARE, and accepts, in all of them, alike the evil and the good. The question is, therefore, how the art which represents things simply as they are, can be called ideal at all. How does it meet that requirement stated in Chap. III. § 4, as imperative on all great art, that it shall be inventive, and a product of the imagination? It meets it pre-eminently by that power of arrangement which I have endeavored, at great length and with great pains, to define accurately in the chapter on Imagination associative in the second volume. That is to say, accepting the weaknesses, faults, and wrongnesses in all things that it sees, it so places and harmonizes them that they form a noble whole, in which the imperfection of each several part is not only harmless, but absolutely essential, and yet in which whatever is good in each several part shall be completely displayed.

§ 2. This operation of true idealism holds, from the least things to the greatest. For instance, in the arrangement of the smallest masses of color, the false idealist, or even the purist, depends upon perfecting each separate hue, and raises them all, as far as he can, into costly brilliancy; but the naturalist takes the coarsest and feeblest colors of the things around him, and so interweaves and opposes them that they become more lovely than if they had all been bright. So in the treatment of the human form. The naturalist will take it as he finds it; but, with such examples as his picture may rationally admit of more or less exalted beauty, he will associate inferior forms, so as not only to set off those which are most beautiful, but to bring out clearly what good there is in the inferior forms themselves;

finally using such measure of absolute evil as there is commonly in nature, both for teaching and for contrast.

In Tintoret's Adoration of the Magi, the Madonna is not an enthroned queen, but a fair girl, full of simplicity and almost childish sweetness. To her are opposed (as Magi) two of the noblest and most thoughtful of the Venetian senators in extreme old age,—the utmost manly dignity, in its decline, being set beside the utmost feminine simplicity, in its dawn. The steep foreheads and refined features of the nobles are, again, opposed to the head of a negro servant, and of an Indian, both, however, noble of their kind. On the other side of the picture, the delicacy of the Madonna is farther enhanced by contrast with a largely made farm-servant, leaning on a basket. All these figures are in repose : outside, the troop of the attendants of the Magi is seen coming up at the gallop.

§ 3. I bring forward this picture, observe, not as an example of the ideal in conception of religious subject, but of the general ideal treatment of the human form ; in which the peculiarity is, that the beauty of each figure is displayed to the utmost, while yet, taken separately the Madonna is an unaltered portrait of a Venetian girl, the Magi are unaltered Venetian Senators, and the figure with the basket, an unaltered market-woman of Mestre.

And the greater the master of the ideal, the more perfectly true in *portraiture* will his individual figures be always found, the more subtle and bold his arts of harmony and contrast. This is a universal principle, common to all great art. Consider, in Shakspere, how Prince Henry is opposed to Falstaff, Falstaff to Shallow, Titania to Bottom, Cordelia to Regan, Imogen to Cloten, and so on ; while all the meaner idealists disdain the naturalism, and are shocked at the contrasts. The fact is, a man who can see truth at all, sees it wholly, and neither desires nor dares to mutilate it.

§ 4. It is evident that *within* this faithful idealism, and as one branch of it only, will arrange itself the representation of the human form and mind in perfection, when this perfection is rationally to be supposed or introduced,—that is to say, in the highest personages of the story. The careless habit of confining the term "ideal" to such representations, and not under-

standing the imperfect ones to be *equally* ideal in their place, has greatly added to the embarrassment and multiplied the errors of artists.* Thersites is just as ideal as Achilles, and Alecto as Helen; and, what is more, all the nobleness of the beautiful ideal depends upon its being just as probable and natural as the ugly one, and having in itself, occasionally or partially, both faults and familiarities. If the next painter who desires to illustrate the character of Homer's Achilles, would represent him cutting pork chops for Ulysses,† he would enable the public to understand the Homeric ideal better than they have done for several centuries. For it is to be kept in mind that the *naturalist ideal* has always in it, to the full, the power expressed by those two words. It is naturalist, because studied from nature, and ideal, because it is mentally arranged in a certain manner. Achilles must be represented cutting pork chops, because that was one of the things which the nature of Achilles involved his doing: he could not be shown wholly as Achilles, if he were not shown doing that. But he shall do it at such time and place as Homer chooses.

§ 5. Now, therefore, observe the main conclusions which follow from these two conditions, attached always to art of this kind. First, it is to be taken straight from nature; it is to be the plain narration of something the painter or writer saw. Herein is the chief practical difference between the higher and lower artists; a difference which I feel more and more every day that I give to the study of art. All the great men *see* what they paint before they paint it,—see it in a perfectly passive manner,—cannot help seeing it if they would; whether in their mind's eye, or in bodily fact, does not matter; very often the mental vision is, I believe, in men of imagination, clearer than the bodily one; but vision it is, of one kind or another,—the whole scene, character, or incident passing before them as in second sight, whether they will or no, and requiring them to paint it as they see it; they not daring, under the might of its

* The word "ideal" is used in this limited sense in the chapter on Generic Beauty in the second volume, but under protest. See § 4 in that chapter.

† Il. ix. 209.

presence, to alter * one jot or tittle of it as they write it down or paint it down; it being to them in its own kind and degree always a true vision or Apocalypse, and invariably accompanied in their hearts by a feeling correspondent to the words,— "Write the things *which thou hast seen*, and the things which *are*."

And the whole power, whether of painter or poet, to describe rightly what we call an ideal thing, depends upon its being thus, to him, not an ideal, but a *real* thing. No man ever did or ever will work well, but either from actual sight or sight of faith; and all that we call ideal in Greek or any other art, because to us it is false and visionary, was, to the makers of it, true and existent. The heroes of Phidias are simply representations of such noble human persons as he every day saw, and the gods of Phidias simply representations of such noble divine persons as he thoroughly believed to exist, and did in mental vision truly behold. Hence I said in the second preface to the Seven Lamps of Architecture: "All great art represents something that it sees or believes in; nothing unseen or uncredited."

§ 6. And just because it is always something that it sees or believes in, there is the peculiar character above noted, almost unmistakable, in all high and true ideals, of having been as it were studied from the life, and involving pieces of sudden familiarity, and close *specific* painting which never would have been admitted or even thought of, had not the painter drawn either from the bodily life or from the life of faith. For instance, Dante's centaur, Chiron, dividing his beard with his arrow before he can speak, is a thing that no mortal would ever have thought of, if he had not actually seen the centaur do it. They might have composed handsome bodies of men and horses in all possible ways, through a whole life of pseudo-idealism, and yet never dreamed of any such thing. But the real living centaur actually trotted across Dante's brain, and he saw him do it.

§ 7. And on account of this reality it is, that the great idealists venture into all kinds of what, to the pseudo-idealists, are "vulgarities." Nay, *venturing* is the wrong word; the great

* "And yet you have just said it shall be at such time and place as Homer chooses. Is not this *altering*?" No; wait a little, and read on.

men have no choice in the matter; they do not know or care whether the things they describe are vulgarities or not. They *saw* them: they are the facts of the case. If they had merely composed what they describe, they would have had it at their will to refuse this circumstance or add that. But they did not compose it. It came to them ready fashioned; they were too much impressed by it to think what was vulgar or not vulgar in it. It might be a very wrong thing in a centaur to have so much beard; but so it was. And, therefore, among the various ready tests of true greatness there is not any more certain than this daring reference to, or use of, mean and little things —mean and little, that is, to mean and little minds; but, when used by the great men, evidently part of the noble whole which is authoritatively present before them. Thus, in the highest poetry, as partly above noted in the first chapter, there is no word so familiar but a great man will bring good out of it, or rather, it will bring good to him, and answer some end for which no other word would have done equally well.

§ 8. A common person, for instance, would be mightily puzzled to apply the word "whelp" to any one with a view of flattering him. There is a certain freshness and energy in the term, which gives it agreeableness; but it seems difficult, at first hearing, to use it complimentarily. If the person spoken of be a prince, the difficulty seems increased; and when, farther, he is at one and the same moment to be called a "whelp" and contemplated as a hero, it seems that a common idealist might well be brought to a pause. But hear Shakspere do it:—

> "Invoke his warlike spirit,
> And your great uncle's, Edward the Black Prince,
> Who on the French ground play'd a tragedy,
> Making defeat on the full power of France,
> While his most mighty father on a hill
> Stood smiling, to behold his lion's whelp
> Forage in blood of French nobility."

So a common idealist would have been rather alarmed at the thought of introducing the name of a street in Paris—Straw Street—Rue de Fouarre—into the midst of a description of the highest heavens. Not so Dante,—

" Beyond, thou mayst the flaming lustre scan
Of Isidore, of Bede, and that Richart
Who was in contemplation more than man.
And he, from whom thy looks returning are
To me, a spirit was, that in austere
Deep musings often thought death kept too far.
That is the light eternal of Sigier,
Who while in Rue de Fouarre his days he wore,
Has argued hateful truths in haughtiest ear." CAYLEY.

What did it matter to Dante, up in heaven there, whether the mob below thought him vulgar or not! Sigier *had* read in Straw Street; that was the fact, and he had to say so, and there an end.

§ 9. There is, indeed, perhaps, no greater sign of innate and *real* vulgarity of mind or defective education than the want of power to understand the universality of the ideal truth; the absence of sympathy with the colossal grasp of those intellects, which have in them so much of divine, that nothing is small to them, and nothing large; but with equal and unoffended vision they take in the sum of the world,—Straw Street and the seventh heavens,—in the same instant. A certain portion of this divine spirit is visible even in the lower examples of all the true men; it is, indeed, perhaps, the clearest test of their belonging to the true and great group, that they are continually touching what to the multitude appear vulgarities. The higher a man stands, the more the word "vulgar" becomes unintelligible to him. Vulgar? what, that poor farmer's girl of William Hunt's, bred in the stable, putting on her Sunday gown, and pinning her best cap out of the green and red pin-cushion! Not so; she may be straight on the road to those high heavens, and may shine hereafter as one of the stars in the firmament for ever. Nay, even that lady in the satin bodice with her arm laid over a balustrade to show it, and her eyes turned up to heaven to show them; and the sportsman waving his rifle for the terror of beasts, and displaying his perfect dress for the delight of men, are kept, by the very misery and vanity of them, in the thoughts of a great painter, at a sorrowful level, somewhat above vulgarity. It is only when the minor painter takes them on his easel, that they become things for the universe to be ashamed of.

We may dismiss this matter of vulgarity in plain and few words, at least as far as regards art. There is never vulgarity in a *whole* truth, however commonplace. It may be unimportant or painful. It cannot be vulgar. Vulgarity is only in concealment of truth, or in affectation.

§ 10. "Well, but," (at this point the reader asks doubtfully,) "if then your great central idealist is to show all truth, low as well as lovely, receiving it in this passive way, what becomes of all your principles of selection, and of setting in the right place, which you were talking about up to the end of your fourth paragraph? How is Homer to enforce upon Achilles the cutting of the pork chops 'only at such time as Homer chooses,' if Homer is to have *no* choice, but merely to see the thing done, and sing it as he sees it?" Why, the choice, as well as the vision, is *manifested* to Homer. The vision comes to him in its chosen order. Chosen *for* him, not *by* him, but yet full of visible and exquisite choice, just as a sweet and perfect dream will come to a sweet and perfect person, so that, in some sense, they may be said to have chosen their dream, or composed it; and yet they could not help dreaming it so, and in no other wise. Thus, exactly thus, in all results of true inventive power, the whole harmony of the thing done seems as if it had been wrought by the most exquisite rules. But to him who did it, it presented itself so, and his will, and knowledge, and personality, for the moment went for nothing; he became simply a scribe, and wrote what he heard and saw.

And all efforts to do things of a similar kind by rule or by thought, and all efforts to mend or rearrange the first order of the vision, are not inventive; on the contrary, they ignore and deny invention. If any man, seeing certain forms laid on the canvas, does by his reasoning power determine that certain changes wrought in them would mend or enforce them, that is not only uninventive, but contrary to invention, which must be the involuntary occurrence of certain forms or fancies to the mind in the order they are to be portrayed. Thus the knowing of rules and the exertion of judgment have a tendency to check and confuse the fancy in its flow; so that it will follow, that, in exact proportion as a master knows anything about rules of right and wrong, he is likely to be uninventive; and in exact

proportion as he holds higher rank and has nobler inventive power, he will know less of rules; not despising them, but simply feeling that between him and them there is nothing in common,—that dreams cannot be ruled—that as they come, so they must be caught, and they cannot be caught in any other shape than that they come in; and that he might as well attempt to rule a rainbow into rectitude, or cut notches in a moth's wings to hold it by, as in any wise attempt to modify, by rule, the forms of the involuntary vision.

§ 11. And this, which by reason we have thus anticipated, is in reality universally so. There is no exception. The great men never know how or why they do things. They have no rules; cannot comprehend the nature of rules;—do not, usually, even know, in what they do, what is best or what is worst: to them it is all the same; something they cannot help saying or doing,—one piece of it as good as another, and none of it (it seems to *them*) worth much. The moment any man begins to talk about rules, in whatsoever art, you may know him for a second-rate man; and, if he talks about them *much*, he is a third-rate, or not an artist at all. To *this* rule there is no exception in any art; but it is perhaps better to be illustrated in the art of music than in that of painting. I fell by chance the other day upon a work of De Stendhal's, "Vies de Haydn, de Mozart, et de Metastase," fuller of common sense than any book I ever read on the arts; though I see, by the slight references made occasionally to painting, that the author's knowledge therein is warped and limited by the elements of general teaching in the schools around him; and I have not yet, therefore, looked at what he has separately written on painting. But one or two passages out of this book on music are closely to our present purpose.

"Counterpoint is related to mathematics: a fool, with patience, becomes a respectable savant in that; but for the part of genius, melody, it has no rules. No art is so utterly deprived of precepts for the production of the beautiful. So much the better for it and for us. Cimarosa, when first at Prague his air was executed, Pria che spunti in ciel l'Aurora, never heard the pedants say to him, 'Your air is fine, because you have followed such and such a rule established by Pergolese

in such an one of his airs; but it would be finer still if you had conformed yourself to such another rule from which Galluppi never deviated.' "

Yes: "so much the better for it, and for us;" but I trust the time will soon come when melody in painting will be understood, no less than in music, and when people will find that, there also, the great melodists have no rules, and cannot have any, and that there are in this, as in sound, "no precepts for the production of the beautiful."

§ 12. Again. "Behold, my friend, an example of that simple way of answering which embarrasses much. One asked him (Haydn) the *reason* for a harmony—for a passage's being assigned to one instrument rather than another; but all he ever answered was, 'I have done it, because it does well.'" Farther on, De Stendhal relates an anecdote of Haydn; I believe one well known, but so much to our purpose that I repeat it. Haydn had agreed to give some lessons in counterpoint to an English nobleman. "'For our first lesson,' said the pupil, already learned in the art—drawing at the same time a quatuor of Haydn's from his pocket, 'for our first lesson may we examine this quatuor; and will you tell me the reasons of certain modulations, which I cannot entirely approve because they are contrary to the principles?' Haydn, a little surprised, declared himself ready to answer. The nobleman began; and at the very first measures found matter for objection. Haydn, *who invented habitually,* and who was the contrary of a pedant, found himself much embarrassed, and answered always, 'I have done that because it has a good effect. I have put that passage there because it does well.' The Englishman, who judged that these answers proved nothing, recommenced his proofs, and demonstrated to him, bv very good reasons, that his quatuor was good for nothing. 'But, my lord, arrange this quatuor then to your fancy,—play it so, and you will see which of the two ways is the best.' 'But why is yours the best which is contrary to the rules?' 'Because it is the pleasantest.' The nobleman replied. Haydn at last lost patience, and said, 'I see, my lord, it is you who have the goodness to give lessons to me, and truly I am forced to confess to you that I do not deserve the honor.' The partizan of the rules departed, still

astonished that in following the rules to the letter one cannot infallibly produce a 'Matrimonio Segreto.'"

This anecdote, whether in all points true or not, is in its tendency most instructive, except only in that it makes *one* false inference or admission, namely, that a good composition can be *contrary* to the rules. It may be contrary to certain principles, supposed in ignorance to be general; but every great composition is in perfect harmony with all true rules, and involves thousands too delicate for ear, or eye, or thought, to trace; still it is possible to reason, with infinite pleasure and profit, about these principles, when the thing is once done; only, all our reasoning will not enable any one to do another thing like it, because all reasoning falls infinitely short of the divine instinct. Thus we may reason wisely over the way a bee builds its comb, and be profited by finding out certain things about the angles of it. But the bee knows nothing about those matters. It builds its comb in a far more inevitable way. And, from a bee to Paul Veronese, all master-workers work with this awful, this inspired unconsciousness.

§ 13. I said just now that there was no exception to *this* law, that the great men never knew how or why they did things. It is, of course, only with caution that such a broad statement should be made; but I have seen much of different kinds of artists, and I have always found the knowledge of, and attention to, rules so *accurately* in the inverse ratio to the power of the painter, that I have myself no doubt that the law is constant, and that men's smallness may be trigonometrically estimated by the attention which, in their work, they pay to principles, especially principles of composition. The general way in which the great men speak is of "*trying* to do" this or that, just as a child would tell of something he had seen and could not utter. Thus, in speaking of the drawing of which I have given an etching farther on (a scene on the St. Gothard*), Turner asked if I had been to see "that litter of stones which I *endeavored* to represent;" and William Hunt, when I asked him one day as he was painting, why he put on such and such a color, answered, "I don't know; I am just *aiming* at it;" and

* See Plate XXI. in Chap. III. Vol. IV.

Turner, and he, and all the other men I have known who could paint, always spoke and speak in the same way; not in any selfish restraint of their knowledge, but in pure simplicity. While all the men whom I know, who *cannot* paint, are ready with admirable reasons for everything they have done; and can show, in the most conclusive way, that Turner is wrong, and how he might be improved.

§ 14. And this is the reason for the somewhat singular, but very palpable truth that the Chinese, and Indians, and other semi-civilized nations, can color better than we do, and that an Indian shawl or Chinese vase are still, in invention of color, inimitable by us. It is their glorious ignorance of all rules that does it; the pure and true instincts have play, and do their work,—instincts so subtle, that the least warping or compression breaks or blunts them; and the moment we begin teaching people any rules about color, and make them do this or that, we crush the instinct generally for ever. Hence, hitherto, it has been an actual necessity, in order to obtain power of coloring, that a nation should be half-savage: everybody could color in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; but we were ruled and legalized into grey in the fifteenth;—only a little salt simplicity of their sea natures at Venice still keeping their precious, shellfishy purpleness and power; and now that is gone; and nobody can color anywhere, except the Hindoos and Chinese; but that need not be so, and will not be so long; for, in a little while, people will find out their mistake, and give up talking about rules of color, and then everybody will color again, as easily as they now talk.

§ 15. Such, then, being the generally passive or instinctive character of right invention, it may be asked how these unmanageable instincts are to be rendered practically serviceable in historical or poetical painting,—especially historical, in which given facts are to be represented. Simply by the sense and self-control of the whole man; not by control of the particular fancy or vision. He who habituates himself, in his daily life, to seek for the stern facts in whatever he hears or sees, will have these facts again brought before him by the involuntary imaginative power in their noblest associations; and he who seeks for frivolities and fallacies, will have frivolities and falla-

cies again presented to him in his dreams. Thus if, in reading history for the purpose of painting from it, the painter severely seeks for the accurate circumstances of every event; as, for instance, determining the exact spot of ground on which his hero fell, the way he must have been looking at the moment, the height the sun was at (by the hour of the day), and the way in which the light must have fallen upon his face, the actual number and individuality of the persons by him at the moment, and such other veritable details, ascertaining and dwelling upon them without the slightest care for any desirableness or poetic propriety in them, but for their own truth's sake; then these truths will afterwards rise up and form the body of his imaginative vision, perfected and united as his inspiration may teach. But if, in reading the history, he does not regard these facts, but thinks only how it might all most prettily, and properly, and impressively have happened, then there is nothing but prettiness and propriety to form the body of his future imagination, and his whole ideal becomes false. So, in the higher or expressive part of the work, the whole virtue of it depends on his being able to quit his own personality, and enter successively into the hearts and thoughts of each person; and in all this he is still passive: in gathering the truth he is passive, not determining what the truth to be gathered shall be; and in the after vision he is passive, not determining, but as his dreams will have it, what the truth to be represented shall be; only according to his own nobleness is his power of entering into the hearts of noble persons, and the general character of his dream of them.*

§ 16. It follows from all this, evidently, that a great idealist never can be egotistic. The whole of his power depends upon his losing sight and feeling of his own existence, and becoming a mere witness and mirror of truth, and a scribe of visions,—always passive in sight, passive in utterance,—lamenting continually that he cannot completely reflect nor clearly utter all he has seen. Not by any means a proud state for a man to be in. But the man who has no invention is always setting things in

* The reader should, of course, refer for further details on this subject to the chapters on Imagination in Vol. II., of which I am only glancing now at the practical results.

order, and putting the world to rights, and mending, and beautifying, and pluming himself on his doings as supreme in all ways.

§ 17. There is still the question open, What are the principal directions in which this ideal faculty is to exercise itself most usefully for mankind?

This question, however, is not to the purpose of our present work, which respects landscape-painting only; it must be one of those left open to the reader's thoughts, and for future inquiry in another place. One or two essential points I briefly notice.

In Chap. IV. § 5. it was said, that one of the first functions of imagination was traversing the scenes of history, and forcing the facts to become again visible. But there is so little of such force in written history, that it is no marvel there should be none hitherto in painting. There does not exist, as far as I know, in the world a single example of a good historical picture (that is to say, of one which, allowing for necessary dimness in art as compared with nature, yet answers nearly the same ends in our minds as the sight of the real event would have answered); the reason being, the universal endeavor to get *effects* instead of facts, already shown as the root of false idealism. True historical ideal, founded on sense, correctness of knowledge, and purpose of usefulness, does not yet exist; the production of it is a task which the closing nineteenth century may propose to itself.

§ 18. Another point is to be observed. I do not, as the reader may have lately perceived, insist on the distinction between historical and poetical painting, because, as noted in the 22nd paragraph of the third chapter, all great painting must be both.

Nevertheless, a certain distinction must generally exist between men who, like Horace Vernet, David, or Domenico Tintoret, would employ themselves in painting, more or less graphically, the outward verities of passing events—battles, councils, &c.—of their day (who, supposing them to work worthily of their mission, would become, properly so called, historical or narrative painters); and men who sought, in scenes of perhaps less outward importance, "noble grounds for noble emotion;" —who would be, in a certain separate sense, *poetical* painters,

some of them taking for subjects events which had actually happened, and others themes from the poets; or, better still, becoming poets themselves in the entire sense, and inventing the story as they painted it. Painting seems to me only just to be beginning, in this sense also, to take its proper position beside literature, and the pictures of the "Awakening Conscience," "Huguenot," and such others, to be the first fruits of its new effort.

§ 19. Finally, as far as I can observe, it is a constant law that the greatest men, whether poets or historians, live entirely in their own age, and that the greatest fruits of their work are gathered out of their own age. Dante paints Italy in the thirteenth century; Chaucer, England in the fourteenth; Masaccio, Florence in the fifteenth; Tintoret, Venice in the sixteenth; —all of them utterly regardless of anachronism and minor error of every kind, but getting always vital truth out of the vital present.

§ 20. If it be said that Shakspere wrote perfect historical plays on subjects belonging to the preceding centuries, I answer, that they *are* perfect plays just because there is no care about centuries in them, but a life which all men recognise for the human life of all time; and this it is, not because Shakspere sought to give universal truth, but because, painting honestly and completely from the men about him, he painted that human nature which is, indeed, constant enough,—a rogue in the fifteenth century being, *at heart*, what a rogue is in the nineteenth and was in the twelfth; and an honest or a knightly man being, in like manner, very similar to other such at any other time. And the work of these great idealists is, therefore, always universal; not because it is *not portrait*, but because it is *complete* portrait down to the heart, which is the same in all ages: and the work of the mean idealists is *not* universal, not because it is portrait, but because it is *half* portrait,—of the outside, the manners and the dress, not of the heart. Thus Tintoret and Shakspere paint, both of them, simply Venetian and English nature as they saw it in their time, down to the root; and it does for *all* time; but as for any care to cast themselves into the particular ways and tones of thought, or custom, of past time in their historical work, you will find it in

neither of them, nor in any other perfectly great man that I know of.

§ 21. If there had been no vital truth in their present, it is hard to say what these men could have done. I suppose, primarily, they would not have existed; that they, and the matter they have to treat of, are given together, and that the strength of the nation and its historians correlatively rise and fall—Herodotus springing out of the dust of Marathon. It is also hard to say how far our better general acquaintance with minor details of past history may make us able to turn the shadow on the imaginative dial backwards, and naturally to live, and even live strongly if we choose, in past periods; but this main truth will always be unshaken, that the only historical painting deserving the name is portraiture of our own living men and our own passing times,* and that all efforts to summon up the events of bygone periods, though often useful and touching, must come under an inferior class of poetical painting; nor will it, I believe, ever be much followed as their main work by the strongest men, but only by the weaker and comparatively sentimental (rather than imaginative) groups. This marvellous first half of the nineteenth century has in this matter, as in nearly all others, been making a double blunder. It has, under the name of improvement, done all it could to EFFACE THE RECORDS which departed ages have left of themselves, while it has declared the FORGERY OF FALSE RECORDS of these same ages to be the great work of its historical painters! I trust that in a few years more we shall come somewhat to our senses in the matter, and begin to perceive that our duty is to preserve what the past has had to say for itself, and to say for ourselves also what shall be true for the future. Let us strive, with just veneration for that future, first to do what is worthy to be spoken, and then to speak it faithfully; and, with veneration for the past, recognize that it is indeed in the power of love to preserve the monument, but not of incantation to raise the dead.

* See Edinburgh Lectures, p. 217.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE TRUE IDEAL: THIRDLY, GROTESQUE.

§ 1. I HAVE already, in the Stones of Venice, had occasion to analyze, as far as I was able, the noble nature and power of grotesque conception; I am not sorry occasionally to refer the reader to that work, the fact being that it and this are parts of one whole, divided merely as I had occasion to follow out one or other of its branches; for I have always considered architecture as an essential part of landscape; and I think the study of its best styles and real meaning one of the necessary functions of the landscape-painter; as, in like manner, the architect cannot be a master-workman until all his designs are guided by understanding of the wilder beauty of pure nature. But, be this as it may, the discussion of the grotesque element belonged most properly to the essay on architecture, in which that element must always find its fullest development.

§ 2. The Grotesque is in that chapter * divided principally into three kinds:

(A). Art arising from healthful but irrational play of the imagination in times of rest.

(B). Art arising from irregular and accidental contemplation of terrible things; or evil in general.

(C). Art arising from the confusion of the imagination by the presence of truths which it cannot wholly grasp.

It is the central form of this art, arising from contemplation of evil, which forms the link of connection between it and the sensualist ideals, as pointed out above in the second paragraph of the sixth chapter, the fact being that the imagination, when at play, is curiously like bad children, and likes to play with fire; in its entirely serious moods it dwells by preference on

* On the Grotesque Renaissance, vol. iii.

beautiful and sacred images, but in its mocking or playful moods it is apt to jest, sometimes bitterly, with under-current of sternest pathos, sometimes waywardly, sometimes slightly and wickedly, with death and sin; hence an enormous mass of grotesque art, some most noble and useful, as Holbein's Dance of Death, and Albert Durer's Knight and Death,* going down gradually through various conditions of less and less seriousness into an art whose only end is that of mere excitement, or amusement by terror, like a child making mouths at another, more or less redeemed by the degree of wit or fancy in the grimace it makes, as in the demons of Teniers and such others; and, lower still, in the demonology of the stage.

§ 3. The form arising from an entirely healthful and open play of the imagination, as in Shakspere's Ariel and Titania, and in Scott's White Lady, is comparatively rare. It hardly ever is free from some slight taint of the inclination to evil; still more rarely is it, when so free, natural to the mind; for the moment we begin to contemplate sinless beauty we are apt to get serious; and moral fairy tales, and such other innocent work, are hardly ever truly, that is to say, naturally imaginative; but for the most part laborious inductions and compositions. The moment any real vitality enters them, they are nearly sure to become satirical, or slightly gloomy, and so connect themselves with the evil-enjoying branch.

§ 4. The third form of the Grotesque is a thoroughly noble one. It is that which arises out of the use or fancy of tangible signs to set forth an otherwise less expressible truth; including nearly the whole range of symbolical and allegorical art and poetry. Its nobleness has been sufficiently insisted upon in the place before referred to. (Chapter on Grotesque Renaissance, §§ LXIII. LXIV. &c.) Of its practical use, especially in painting, deeply despised among us, because grossly misunderstood, a few words must be added here.

A fine grotesque is the expression, in a moment, by a series of symbols thrown together in bold and fearless connection, of truths which it would have taken a long time to express in any verbal way, and of which the connection is left for the beholder

* See Appendix I. Vol. IV. "Modern Grotesque."

to work out for himself; the gaps, left or overleaped by the haste of the imagination, forming the grotesque character.

§ 5. For instance, Spenser desires to tell us, (1.) that envy is the most untamable and unappeasable of the passions, not to be soothed by any kindness; (2.) that with continual labor it invents evil thoughts out of its own heart; (3.) that even in this, its power of doing harm is partly hindered by the decaying and corrupting nature of the evil it lives in; (4.) that it looks every way, and that whatever it sees is altered and discolored by its own nature; (5.) which discoloring, however, is to it a veil, or disgraceful dress, in the sight of others; (6.) and that it never is free from the most bitter suffering, (7.) which cramps all its acts and movements, enfolding and crushing it while it torments. All this it has required a somewhat long and languid sentence for me to say in unsymbolical terms,—not, by the way, that they *are* unsymbolical altogether, for I have been forced, whether I would or not, to use *some* figurative words; but even with this help the sentence is long and tiresome, and does not with any vigor represent the truth. It would take some prolonged enforcement of each sentence to make it felt, in ordinary ways of talking. But Spenser puts it all into a grotesque, and it is done shortly and at once, so that we feel it fully, and see it, and never forget it. I have numbered above the statements which had to be made. I now number them with the same numbers, as they occur in the several pieces of the grotesque :—

" And next to him malicious Envy rode
(1.) Upon a ravenous wolfe, and (2. 3.) still did chaw
Between his cankred * teeth a venemous tode
That all the poison ran about his jaw.
(4. 5.) All in a kirtle of discolourd say
He clothed was, y-paynted full of eies;
(6.) And in his bosome secretly there lay
An hatefull snake, the which his tail uptyes
(7.) In many folds, and mortall sting implyes."

There is the whole thing in nine lines; or, rather, in one image, which will hardly occupy any room at all on the mind's shelves, but can be lifted out, whole, whenever we want it. All noble grotesques are concentrations of this kind, and the

* Cankred—because he cannot then bite hard.

noblest convey truths which nothing else could convey; and not only so, but convey them, in minor cases with a delightfulness,—in the higher instances with an awfulness,—which no mere utterance of the symbolised truth would have possessed, but which belongs to the effort of the mind to unweave the riddle, or to the sense it has of there being an infinite power and meaning in the thing seen, beyond all that is apparent therein, giving the highest sublimity even to the most trivial object so presented and so contemplated.

"'Jeremiah, what seest thou?'
'I see a seething pot, and the face thereof is toward the north,
'Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.'"

And thus in all ages and among all nations, grotesque idealism has been the element through which the most appalling and eventful truth has been wisely conveyed, from the most sublime words of true Revelation, to the "ἀλλ' ὅτ' ἂν ἡμίονος βασιλεύς," &c., of the oracles, and the more or less doubtful teaching of dreams; and so down to ordinary poetry. No element of imagination has a wider range, a more magnificent use, or so colossal a grasp of sacred truth.

§ 6. How, then, is this noble power best to be employed in the art of painting?

We hear it not unfrequently asserted that symbolism or personification should not be introduced in painting at all. Such assertions are in their grounds unintelligible, and in their substance absurd. Whatever is in words described as visible, may with all logical fitness * be rendered so by colors, and not only is this a legitimate branch of ideal art, but I believe there is hardly any other so widely useful and instructive; and I heartily wish that every great allegory which the poets ever invented were powerfully put on canvas, and easily accessible by all men, and that our artists were perpetually exciting themselves to invent more. And as far as authority bears on the question, the simple fact is that allegorical painting has been the delight of the greatest men and of the wisest multitudes, from the beginning of art, and will be till art expires. Orcagna's Triumph of

* Though, perhaps, only in a subordinate degree. See farther on, § 8.

Death; Simon Memmi's frescoes in the Spanish Chapel; Giotto's principal works at Assisi, and partly at the Arena; Michael Angelo's two best statues, the Night and Day; Albert Durer's noble Melancholy, and hundreds more of his best works; a full third, I should think, of the works of Tintoret and Veronese, and nearly as large a portion of those of Raphael and Rubens, are entirely symbolical or personifiant; and, except in the case of the last-named painter, are always among the most interesting works the painters executed. The greater and more thoughtful the artists, the more they delight in symbolism, and the more fearlessly they employ it. Dead symbolism, second-hand symbolism, pointless symbolism, are indeed objectionable enough; but so are most other things that are dead, second-hand, and pointless. It is also true that both symbolism and personification are somewhat more apt than most things to have their edges taken off by too much handling; and what with our modern Fames, Justices, and various metaphorical ideals, largely used for signs and other such purposes, there is some excuse for our not well knowing what the real power of personification is. But that power is gigantic and inexhaustible, and ever to be grasped with peculiar joy by the painter, because it permits him to introduce picturesque elements and flights of fancy into his work, which otherwise would be utterly inadmissible; to bring the wild beasts of the desert into the room of state, fill the air with inhabitants as well as the earth, and render the least (visibly) interesting incidents themes for the most thrilling drama. Even Tintoret might sometimes have been hard put to it, when he had to fill a large panel in the Ducal Palace with the portrait of a nowise interesting Doge, unless he had been able to lay a winged lion beside him, ten feet long from the nose to the tail, asleep upon the Turkey carpet; and Rubens could certainly have made his flatteries of Mary of Medicis palatable to no one but herself, without the help of rosy-cheeked goddesses of abundance, and seven-headed hydras of rebellion.

§ 7. For observe, not only does the introduction of these imaginary beings permit greater fantasticism of *incident*, but also infinite fantasticism of *treatment*; and, I believe, so far from the pursuit of the false ideal having in any wise exhausted the

realms of fantastic imagination, those realms have hardly yet been entered, and that a universe of noble dream-land lies before us, yet to be conquered. For, hitherto, when fantastic creatures have been introduced, either the masters have been so realistic in temper that they made the spirits as substantial as their figures of flesh and blood,—as Rubens, and, for the most part, Tintoret; or else they have been weak and unpractised in realization, and have painted transparent or cloudy spirits because they had no power of painting grand ones. But if a really great painter, thoroughly capable of giving substantial truth, and master of the elements of pictorial effect which have been developed by modern art, would solemnly, and yet fearlessly, cast his fancy free in the spiritual world, and faithfully follow out such masters of that world as Dante and Spenser, there seems no limit to the splendor of thought which painting might express. Consider, for instance, how the ordinary personifications of Charity oscillate between the mere nurse of many children, of Reynolds, and the somewhat painfully conceived figure with flames issuing from the heart, of Giotto; and how much more significance might be given to the representation of Love, by amplifying with tenderness the thought of Dante, "Tanta rossa, che a pena fora dentro al foco nota,"* that is to say, by representing the loveliness of her face and form as all flushed with glow of crimson light, and, as she descended through heaven, all its clouds colored by her presence as they are by sunset. In the hands of a feeble painter, such an attempt would end in mere caricature; but suppose it taken up by Correggio, adding to his power of flesh-painting the (not inconsistent) feeling of Angelico in design, and a portion of Turner's knowledge of the clouds. There is nothing impossible in such a conjunction as this. Correggio, trained in another school, might have even himself shown some such extent of grasp; and in Turner's picture of the dragon of the Hesperides, Jason, vignette to Voyage of Columbus ("Slowly along the evening sky they went"), and such others, as well as in many of the works of Watts and Rosetti, is already visible, as I trust, the dawn of a new era of art, in a true unison of the grotesque with the realistic power.

* "So red, that in the midst of the fire she could hardly have been seen."

§ 8. There is, however, unquestionably, a severe limit, in the case of all inferior masters, to the degree in which they may venture to realize grotesque conception, and partly, also, a limit in the nature of the thing itself, there being many grotesque ideas which may be with safety suggested dimly by words or slight lines, but which will hardly bear being painted into perfect definiteness. It is very difficult, in reasoning on this matter, to divest ourselves of the prejudices which have been forced upon us by the base grotesque of men like Bronzino, who, having no true imagination, are apt, more than others, to try by startling realism to enforce the monstrosity that has no terror in itself. But it is nevertheless true, that, unless in the hands of the very greatest men, the grotesque seems better to be expressed merely in line, or light and shade, or mere abstract color, so as to mark it for a thought rather than a substantial fact. Even if Albert Durer had perfectly painted his Knight and Death, I question if we should feel it so great a thought as we do in the dark engraving. Blake, perfectly powerful in the etched grotesque of the book of Job, fails always more or less as soon as he adds color; not merely for want of power (his eye for color being naturally good), but because his subjects seem, in a sort, insusceptible of completion; and the two inexpressibly noble and pathetic woodcut grotesques of Alfred Rethel's, Death the Avenger, and Death the Friend, could not, I think, but with disadvantage, be advanced into pictorial color.

And what is thus doubtfully true of the pathetic grotesque, is assuredly and always true of the jesting grotesque. So far as it expresses any transient flash of wit or satire, the less labor of line, or color, given to its expression the better; elaborate jesting being always intensely painful.

§ 9. For these several reasons, it seems not only permissible, but even desirable, that the art by which the grotesque is expressed should be more or less imperfect, and this seems a most beneficial ordinance as respects the human race in general. For the grotesque being not only a most forceful instrument of teaching, but a most natural manner of expression, springing as it does at once from any tendency to playfulness in minds highly comprehensive of truth; and being also one of the readiest ways in which such satire or wit as may be possessed by men

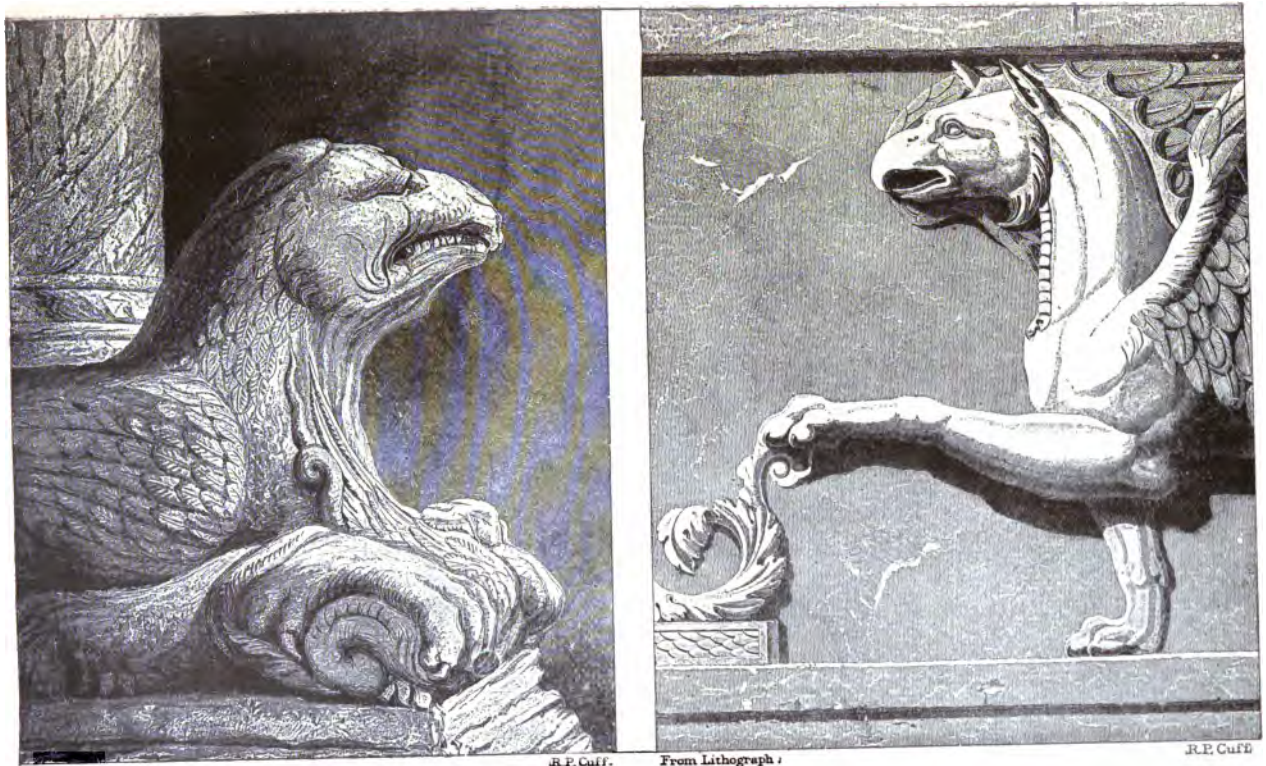
of any inferior rank of mind can be for perpetuity expressed, it becomes on all grounds desirable that what is suggested in times of play should be rightly sayable without toil; and what occurs to men of inferior power or knowledge, sayable without any high degree of skill. Hence it is an infinite good to mankind when there is full acceptance of the grotesque, slightly sketched or expressed; and, if field for such expression be frankly granted, an enormous mass of intellectual power is turned to everlasting use, which, in this present century of ours, evaporates in street gibing or vain revelling; all the good wit and satire expiring in daily talk, (like foam on wine,) which in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had a permitted and useful expression in the arts of sculpture and illumination, like foam fixed into chalcedony. It is with a view (not the least important among many others bearing upon art) to the reopening of this great field of human intelligence, long entirely closed, that I am striving to introduce Gothic architecture into daily domestic use; and to revive the art of illumination, properly so called; not the art of miniature-painting in books, or on vellum, which has ridiculously been confused with it; but of making *writing*, simple writing, beautiful to the eye, by investing it with the great chord of perfect color, blue, purple, scarlet, white, and gold, and in that chord of color, permitting the continual play of the fancy of the writer in every species of grotesque imagination, carefully excluding shadow; the distinctive difference between illumination and painting proper, being, that illumination admits *no* shadows, but only gradations of pure color. And it is in this respect that illumination is specially fitted for grotesque expression; for, when I used the term "*pictorial* color," just now, in speaking of the completion of the grotesque of Death the Avenger, I meant to distinguish such color from the abstract, shadeless hues which are eminently fitted for grotesque thought. The requirement, respecting the slighter grotesque, is only that it shall be *incompletely* expressed. It may have light and shade without color (as in etching and sculpture), or color without light and shade (illumination), but must not, except in the hands of the greatest masters, have both. And for some conditions of the playful

grotesque, the abstract color is a much more delightful element of expression than the abstract light and shade.

§ 10. Such being the manifold and precious uses of the true grotesque, it only remains for us to note carefully how it is to be distinguished from the false and vicious grotesque which results from idleness, instead of noble rest; from malice, instead of the solemn contemplation of necessary evil; and from general degradation of the human spirit, instead of its subjection, or confusion, by thoughts too high for it. It is easy for the reader to conceive how different the fruits of two such different states of mind *must* be; and yet how like in many respects, and apt to be mistaken, one for the other;—how the jest which springs from mere fatuity, and vacant want of penetration or purpose, is everlastingly, infinitely, separated from, and yet may sometimes be mistaken for, the bright, playful, fond, far-sighted jest of Plato, or the bitter, purposeful, sorrowing jest of Aristophanes; how, again, the horror which springs from guilty love of foulness and sin, may be often mistaken for the inevitable horror which a great mind must sometimes feel in the full and penetrative sense of their presence;—how, finally, the vague and foolish inconsistencies of undisciplined dream or reverie may be mistaken for the compelled inconsistencies of thoughts too great to be well sustained, or clearly uttered. It is easy, I say, to understand what a difference there must indeed be between these; and yet how difficult it may be always to define it, or lay down laws for the discovery of it, except by the just instinct of minds set habitually in all things to discern right from wrong.

§ 11. Nevertheless, one good and characteristic instance may be of service in marking the leading directions in which the contrast is discernible. On the opposite page, Plate I., I have put, beside each other, a piece of true grotesque, from the Lombard-Gothic, and of false grotesque from classical (Roman) architecture. They are both griffins; the one on the left carries on his back one of the main pillars of the porch of the cathedral of Verona; the one on the right is on the frieze of the temple of Antoninus and Faustina at Rome, much celebrated by Renaissance and bad modern architects.

In some respects, however, this classical griffin deserves its



1. True and False Griffins.

Mediaeval.

Classical.

reputation. It is exceedingly fine in lines of composition, and, I believe (I have not examined the original closely), very exquisite in execution. For these reasons, it is all the better for our purpose. I do not want to compare the worst false grotesque with the best true, but rather, on the contrary, the best false with the simplest true, in order to see how the delicately wrought lie fails in the presence of the rough truth; for rough truth in the present case it is, the Lombard sculpture being altogether untoward and imperfect in execution.*

§ 12. "Well, but," the reader says, "what do you mean by calling *either* of them true? There never were such beasts in the world as either of these?"

No, never: but the difference is, that the Lombard workman did really see a griffin in his imagination, and carved it from the life, meaning to declare to all ages that he had verily seen with his immortal eyes such a griffin as that; but the classical workman never saw a griffin at all, nor anything else; but put the whole thing together by line and rule.

§ 13. "How do you know that?"

Very easily. Look at the two, and think over them. You know a griffin is a beast composed of lion and eagle. The classical workman set himself to fit these together in the most ornamental way possible. He accordingly carves a sufficiently satisfactory lion's body, then attaches very gracefully cut wings to the sides: then, because he cannot get the eagle's head on the broad lion's shoulders, fits the two together by something like a horse's neck (some griffins being wholly composed of a horse and eagle), then, finding the horse's neck look weak and unformidable, he strengthens it by a series of bosses, like vertebræ, in front, and by a series of spiny cusps, instead of a mane, on the ridge; next, not to lose the whole leonine character about the neck, he gives a remnant of the lion's beard, turned into a sort of griffin's whisker, and nicely curled and pointed; then an eye, probably meant to look grand and abstracted, and therefore neither lion's nor eagle's; and,

* If there be any inaccuracy in the right-hand griffin, I am sorry, but am not answerable for it, as the plate has been faithfully reduced from a large French lithograph, the best I could find. The other is from a sketch of my own.

finally, an eagle's beak, very sufficiently studied from a real one. The whole head being, it seems to him, still somewhat wanting in weight and power, he brings forward the right wing behind it, so as to enclose it with a broad line. This is the finest thing in the composition, and very masterly, both in thought, and in choice of the exactly right point where the lines of wing and beak should intersect (and it may be noticed in passing, that all men, who can compose at all, have this habit of encompassing or governing broken lines with broad ones, wherever it is possible, of which we shall see many instances hereafter). The whole griffin, thus gracefully composed, being, nevertheless, when all is done, a very composed griffin, is set to very quiet work, and raising his left foot, to balance his right wing, sets it on the tendril of a flower so lightly as not even to bend it down, though, in order to reach it, his left leg is made half as long again as his right.

§ 14. We may be pretty sure, if the carver had ever seen a griffin, he would have reported of him as doing something else than *that* with his feet. Let us see what the Lombardic workman saw him doing.

Remember, first, the griffin, though part lion and part eagle, has the united *power of both*. He is not merely a bit of lion and a bit of eagle, but whole lion, incorporate with whole eagle. So when we really see one, we may be quite sure we shall not find him wanting in anything necessary to the might either of beast or bird.

Well, among things essential to the might of a lion, perhaps, on the whole, the most essential are his *teeth*. He could get on pretty well even without his claws, usually striking his prey down with a blow, woundless; but he could by no means get on without his teeth. Accordingly, we see that the real or Lombardic griffin has the carnivorous teeth bare to the root, and the peculiar hanging of the jaw at the back, which marks the flexible and gaping mouth of the devouring tribes.

Again; among things essential to the might of an eagle, next to his wings (which are of course prominent in both examples), are his *claws*. It is no use his being able to tear anything with his beak, if he cannot first hold it in his claws; he has comparatively no leonine power of striking with his feet, but a

magnificent power of grip with them. Accordingly, we see that the real griffin, while his feet are heavy enough to strike like a lion's, has them also extended far enough to give them the eagle's grip with the back claw; and has, moreover, some of the bird-like wrinkled skin over the whole foot, marking this binding power the more; and that he has besides verily got something to hold with his feet, other than a flower, of which more presently.

§ 15. Now observe, the Lombardic workman did not do all this because he had thought it out, as you and I are doing together; he never thought a bit about it. He simply saw the beast; saw it as plainly as you see the writing on this page, and of course could not be wrong in anything he told us of it.

Well, what more does he tell us? Another thing, remember, essential to an eagle is that it should fly *fast*. It is no use its having wings at all if it is to be impeded in the use of them. Now it would be difficult to impede him more thoroughly than by giving him two cocked ears to catch the wind.

Look, again, at the two beasts. You see the false griffin *has* them so set, and, consequently, as he flew, there would be a continual humming of the wind on each side of his head, and he would have an infallible earache when he got home. But the real griffin has his ears flat to his head, and all the hair of them blown back, even to a point, by his fast flying, and the aperture is downwards, that he may hear anything going on upon the earth, where his prey is. In the false griffin the aperture is upwards.

§ 16. Well, what more? As he is made up of the natures of lion and eagle, we may be very certain that a real griffin is, on the whole, fond of eating, and that his throat will look as if he occasionally took rather large pieces, besides being flexible enough to let him bend and stretch his head in every direction as he flies.

Look, again, at the two beasts. You see the false one has got those bosses upon his neck like vertebræ, which must be infinitely in his way when he is swallowing, and which are evidently inseparable, so that he cannot *stretch* his neck any more than a horse. But the real griffin is all loose about the neck, evidently being able to make it almost as much longer as he

likes; to stretch and bend it anywhere, and swallow anything, besides having some of the grand strength of the bull's dewlap in it when at rest.

§ 17. What more? Having both lion and eagle in him, it is probable that the real griffin will have an infinite look of repose as well as power of activity. One of the notablest things about a lion is his magnificent *indolence*, his look of utter disdain of trouble when there is no occasion for it; as, also, one of the notablest things about an eagle is his look of inevitable vigilance, even when quietest. Look, again, at the two beasts. You see the false griffin is quite sleepy and dead in the eye, thus contradicting his eagle's nature, but is putting himself to a great deal of unnecessary trouble with his paws, holding one in a most painful position merely to touch a flower, and bearing the whole weight of his body on the other, thus contradicting his lion's nature.

But the real griffin is primarily, with his eagle's nature, wide awake; evidently quite ready for whatever may happen; and with his lion's nature, laid all his length on his belly, prone and ponderous; his two paws as simply put out before him as a drowsy puppy's on a drawingroom hearth-rug; not but that he has got something to do with them, worthy of such paws; but he takes not one whit more trouble about it than is absolutely necessary. He has merely got a poisonous winged dragon to hold, and for such a little matter as that, he may as well do it lying down and at his ease, looking out at the same time for any other piece of work in his way. He takes the dragon by the middle, one paw under the wing, another above, gathers him up into a knot, puts two or three of his claws well into his back, crashing through the scales of it and wrinkling all the flesh up from the wound, flattens him down against the ground, and so lets him do what he likes. The dragon tries to bite him, but can only bring his head round far enough to get hold of his own wing, which he bites in agony instead; flapping the griffin's dewlap with it, and wriggling his tail up against the griffin's throat; the griffin being, as to these minor proceedings, entirely indifferent, sure that the dragon's body cannot drag itself one hair's breadth off those ghastly claws, and that its head can do no harm but to itself.

§ 18. Now observe how in all this, through every separate part and action of the creature, the imagination is *always* right. It evidently *cannot* err; it meets every one of our requirements respecting the griffin as simply as if it were gathering up the bones of the real creature out of some ancient rock. It does not itself know or care, any more than the peasant laboring with his spade and axe, what is wanted to meet our theories or fancies. It knows simply what is there, and brings out the positive creature, errorless, unquestionable. So it is throughout art, and in all that the imagination does; if anything be wrong it is not the imagination's fault, but some inferior faculty's, which would have its foolish say in the matter, and meddled with the imagination, and said, the bones ought to be put together tail first, or upside down.

§ 19. This, however, we need not be amazed at, because the very essence of the imagination is already defined to be the seeing to the heart; and it is not therefore wonderful that it should never err; but it is wonderful, on the other hand, how the composing legalism does *nothing else* than err. One would have thought that, by mere chance, in this or the other element of griffin, the griffin-composer might have struck out a truth; that he might have had the luck to set the ears back, or to give some grasp to the claw. But, no; from beginning to end it is evidently impossible for him to be anything but wrong; his whole soul is instinct with lies; no veracity can come within hail of him; to him, all regions of right and life are for ever closed.

§ 20. And another notable point is, that while the imagination receives truth in this simple way, it is all the while receiving statutes of composition also, far more noble than those for the sake of which the truth was lost by the legalist. The ornamental lines in the classical griffin appear at first finer than in the other; but they only appear so because they are more commonplace and more palpable. The subtlety of the sweeping and rolling curves in the real griffin, the way they waver and change and fold, down the neck, and along the wing, and in and out among the serpent coils, is incomparably grander, merely as grouping of ornamental line, than anything in the other; nor is it fine as ornamental only, but as massively use-

ful, giving weight of stone enough to answer the entire purpose of pedestal sculpture. Note, especially, the insertion of the three plumes of the dragon's broken wing in the outer angle, just under the large coil of his body; this filling of the gap being one of the necessities, not of the pedestal block merely, but a means of getting mass and breadth, which all composers desire more or less, but which they seldom so perfectly accomplish.

So that taking the truth first, the honest imagination gains everything; it has its griffinism, and grace, and usefulness, all at once: but the false composer, caring for nothing but himself and his rules, loses everything,—griffinism, grace, and all.

§ 21. I believe the reader will now sufficiently see how the terms "true" and "false" are in the most accurate sense attachable to the opposite branches of what might appear at first, in both cases, the merest wildness of inconsistent reverie. But they are even to be attached, in a deeper sense than that in which we have hitherto used them, to these two compositions. For the imagination hardly ever works in this intense way, unencumbered by the inferior faculties, unless it be under the influence of some solemn purpose or sentiment. And to all the falseness and all the verity of these two ideal creatures this farther falsehood and verity have yet to be added, that the classical griffin has, at least in this place, no other intent than that of covering a level surface with entertaining form; but the Lombardic griffin is a profound expression of the most passionate symbolism. Under its eagle's wings are two wheels,* which mark it as connected, in the mind of him who wrought it, with the living creatures of the vision of Ezekiel: "When they went, the wheels went by them, and whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, and the wheels were lifted up over against them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels." Thus signed, the winged shape becomes at once one of the acknowledged symbols of the Divine power; and, in its unity of lion and eagle, the workman of the middle ages always means to set forth the unity of the human and divine natures.† In this unity it bears up the pillars of the Church, set for ever

* At the extremities of the wings,—not seen in the plate.

† Compare the Purgatorio, canto xxix. &c.

as the corner stone. And the faithful and true imagination beholds it, in this unity, with everlasting vigilance and calm omnipotence, restrain the seed of the serpent crushed upon the earth; leaving the head of it free, only for a time, that it may inflict in its fury profounder destruction upon itself,—in this also full of deep meaning. The Divine power does not slay the evil creature. It wounds and restrains it only. Its final and *deadly* wound is inflicted by itself.

CHAPTER IX.

OF FINISH.

§ 1. I AM afraid the reader must be, by this time, almost tired of hearing about truth. But I cannot help this; the more I have examined the various forms of art, and exercised myself in receiving their differently intended impressions, the more I have found this truthfulness a final test, the only test of lasting power; and, although our concern in this part of our inquiry is, professedly, with the beauty which blossoms out of truth, still I find myself compelled always to gather it by the stalk, not by the petals. I cannot hold the beauty, nor be sure of it for a moment, but by feeling for that strong stem.

We have, in the preceding chapters, glanced through the various operations of the imaginative power of man; with this almost painfully monotonous result, that its greatness and honor were always simply in proportion to the quantity of truth it grasped. And now the question, left undetermined some hundred pages back (Chap. II. § 6), recurs to us in a simpler form than it could before. How far is this true imagination to be truly represented? How far should the perfect conception of Pallas be so given as to look like Pallas herself, rather than like the picture of Pallas?

§ 2. A question, this, at present of notable interest, and demanding instant attention. For it seemed to us, in reasoning about Dante's views of art, that he was, or might be, right in desiring realistic completeness; and yet, in what we have just seen of the grotesque ideal, it seemed there was a certain desirableness in *in*completeness. And the schools of art in Europe are, at this moment, set in two hostile ranks,—not nobly hostile, but spitefully and scornfully, having for one of the main grounds of their dispute the apparently simple question, how far a picture may be carried forward in detail, or how soon it may be considered as finished.

I propose, therefore, in the present chapter, to examine, as thoroughly as I can, the real signification of this word, Finish, as applied to art, and to see if in this, as in other matters, our almost tiresome test is not the only right one; whether there be not a *fallacious* finish and a *faithful* finish, and whether the dispute, which seems to be only about completion and incompletion, has not therefore, at the bottom of it, the old and deep grounds of fallacy and fidelity.

§ 3. Observe, first, there are two great and separate senses in which we call a thing finished, or well finished. One, which refers to the mere neatness and completeness of the actual work, as we speak of a well-finished knife-handle or ivory toy (as opposed to ill-cut ones); and, secondly, a sense which refers to the effect produced by the thing done, as we call a picture well-finished if it is so full in its details, as to produce the effect of reality on the spectator. And, in England, we seem at present to value highly the first sort of finish which belongs to work*manship*, in our manufactures and general doings of any kind, but to despise totally the impressive finish which belongs to the *work*; and therefore we like smooth ivories better than rough ones,—but careless scrawls or daubs better than the most complete paintings. Now, I believe that we exactly reverse the fitness of judgment in this matter, and that we ought, on the contrary, to despise the finish of work*manship*, which is done for vanity's sake, and to love the finish of *work*, which is done for truth's sake,—that we ought, in a word, to finish our ivory toys more roughly, and our pictures more delicately.

Let us think over this matter.

§ 4. Perhaps one of the most remarkable points of difference between the English and Continental nations is in the degree of finish given to their ordinary work. It is enough to cross from Dover to Calais to feel this difference; and to travel farther only increases the sense of it. English windows for the most part fit their sashes, and their woodwork is neatly planed and smoothed; French windows are larger, heavier, and framed with wood that looks as if it had been cut to its shape with a hatchet; they have curious and cumbrous fastenings, and can only be forced asunder or together by some ingenuity and effort, and even then not properly. So with everything else—

French, Italian, and German, and, as far as I know, Continental. Foreign drawers do not slide as well as ours; foreign knives do not cut so well; foreign wheels do not turn so well; and we commonly plume ourselves much upon this, believing that generally the English people do their work better and more thoroughly, or as they say, "turn it out of their hands in better style," than foreigners. I do not know how far this is really the case. There may be a flimsy neatness, as well as a substantial roughness; it does not necessarily follow that the window which shuts easiest will last the longest, or that the harness which glitters the most is assuredly made of the toughest leather. I am afraid, that if this peculiar character of finish in our workmanship ever arose from a greater heartiness and thoroughness in our ways of doing things, it does so only now in the case of our best manufacturers; and that a great deal of the work done in England, however good in appearance, is but treacherous and rotten in substance. Still, I think that there is really in the English mind, for the most part, a stronger desire to do things as well as they can be done, and less inclination to put up with inferiorities or insufficiencies, than in general characterise the temper of foreigners. There is in this conclusion no ground for national vanity; for though the desire to do things as well as they can be done at first appears like a virtue, it is certainly not so in all its forms. On the contrary, it proceeds in nine cases out of ten more from vanity than conscientiousness; and that, moreover, often a weak vanity. I suppose that as much finish is displayed in the fittings of the private carriages of our young rich men as in any other department of English manufacture; and that our St. James's Street cabs, dogcarts, and liveries are singularly perfect in their way. But the feeling with which this perfection is insisted upon (however desirable as a sign of energy of purpose) is not in itself a peculiarly amiable or noble feeling; neither is it an ignoble disposition which would induce a country gentleman to put up with certain deficiencies in the appearance of his country-made carriage. It is true that such philosophy may degenerate into negligence, and that much thought and long discussion would be needed before we could determine satisfactorily the limiting lines between virtuous contentment and

faultful carelessness; but at all events we have no right at once to pronounce ourselves the wisest people because we like to do all things in the best way. There are many little things which to do admirably is to waste both time and cost; and the real question is not so much whether we have done a given thing as well as possible, as whether we have turned a given quantity of labor to the best account.

§ 5. Now, so far from the labor's being turned to good account which is given to our English "finishing," I believe it to be usually destructive of the best powers of our workmen's minds. For it is evident, in the first place, that there is almost always a useful and a useless finish; the hammering and welding which are necessary to produce a sword plate of the best quality, are useful finishing; the polishing of its surface, useless.* In nearly all work this distinction will, more or less, take place between substantial finish and apparent finish, or what may be briefly characterized as "Make" and "Polish." And so far as finish is bestowed for purposes of "make," I have nothing to say against it. Even the vanity which displays itself in giving strength to our work is rather a virtue than a vice. But so far as finish is bestowed for purposes of "polish," there is much to be said against it; this first, and very strongly, that the qualities aimed at in common finishing, namely, smoothness, delicacy, or fineness, *cannot* in reality *exist*, in a degree worth admiring, in anything done by human hands. Our best finishing is but coarse and blundering work after all. We may smooth, and soften, and sharpen till we are sick at heart; but take a good magnifying glass to our miracle of skill, and the invisible edge is a jagged saw, and the silky thread a rugged cable, and the soft surface a granite desert. Let all the ingenuity and all the art of the human race be brought to bear upon the attainment of the utmost possible finish, and they could not do what is done in the foot of a fly, or the film of a bubble. God alone can finish; and the more intelligent the human mind becomes, the more the infiniteness of interval is felt between human and divine work in this respect. So then

* "With his Yemen sword for aid;
Ornament it carried none,
But the notches on the blade."

it is not a little absurd to weary ourselves in struggling towards a point which we never can reach, and to exhaust our strength in vain endeavors to produce qualities which exist inimitably and inexhaustibly in the commonest things around us.

§ 6. But more than this: the fact is that in multitudes of instances, instead of gaining greater fineness of finish by our work, we are only destroying the fine finish of nature, and substituting coarseness and imperfection. For instance, when a rock of any kind has lain for some time exposed to the weather, Nature finishes it in her own way; first, she takes wonderful pains about its forms, sculpturing it into exquisite variety of dint and dimple, and rounding or hollowing it into contours, which for fineness no human hand can follow; then she colors it; and every one of her touches of color, instead of being a powder mixed with oil, is a minute forest of living trees, glorious in strength and beauty, and concealing wonders of structure, which in all probability are mysteries even to the eyes of angels. Man comes and digs up this finished and marvellous piece of work, which in his ignorance he calls a "rough stone." He proceeds to finish it in *his* fashion, that is, to split it in two, rend it into ragged blocks, and, finally, to chisel its surface into a large number of lumps and knobs, all equally shapeless, colorless, deathful, and frightful.* And the block, thus disfigured, he calls "finished," and proceeds to build therewith, and thinks himself great, forsooth, and an intelligent animal. Whereas, all that he has really done is, to destroy with utter ravage a piece of divine art, which, under the laws appointed by the Deity to regulate his work in this world, it must take good twenty years to produce the like of again. This he has destroyed, and has himself given in its place a piece of work which needs no more intelligence to do than a pholas has, or a worm, or the spirit which throughout the world has authority over rending, rottenness, and decay. I do not say that stone must not be cut; it needs to be cut for certain uses; only I say that the cutting it is not "finishing," but *un*finishing it; and that so far as the mere fact of chiselling goes, the stone is ruined by the human touch. It is with it as with the stones of the Jewish altar: "If thou lift up thy tool upon it thou hast

* See the base of the new Army and Navy Clubhouse.

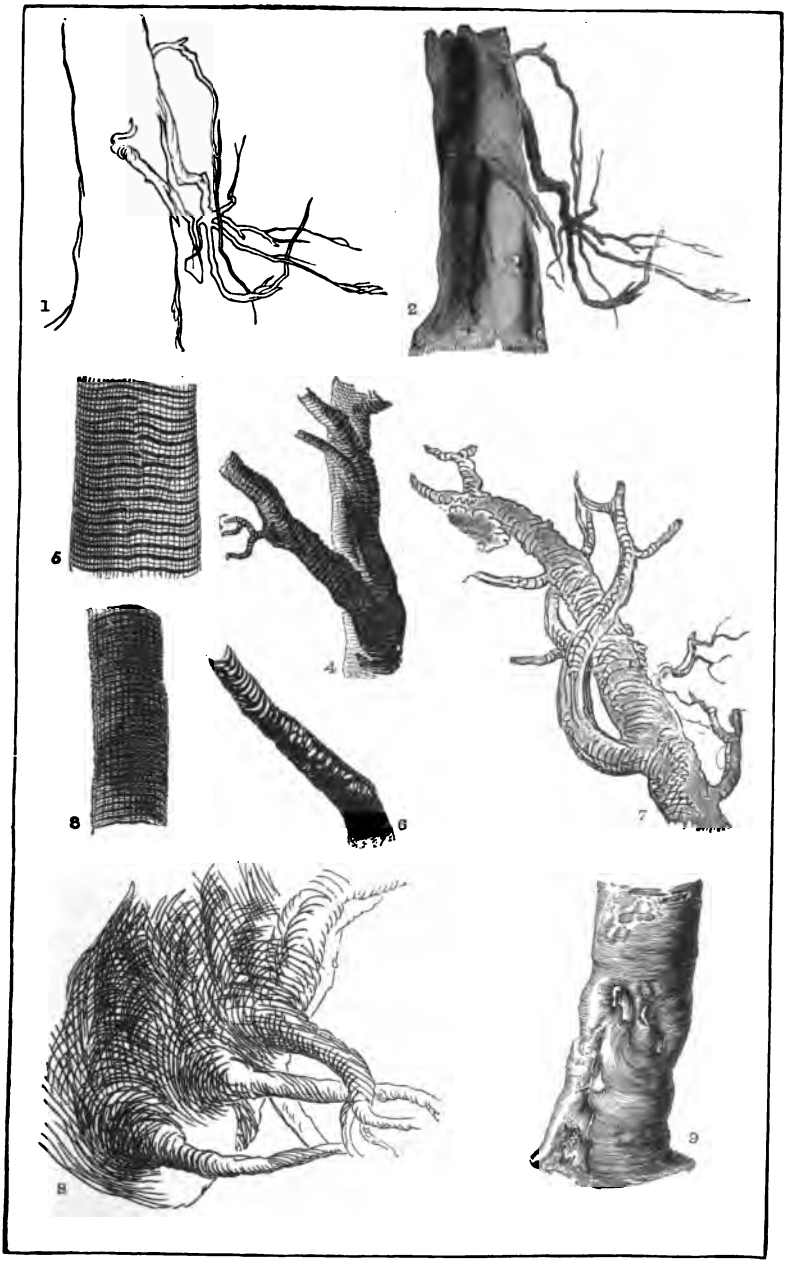
polluted it." In like manner a tree is a finished thing. But a plank, though ever so polished, is not. We need stones and planks, as we need food; but we no more bestow an additional admirableness upon stone in hewing it, or upon a tree in sawing it, than upon an animal in killing it.

§ 7. Well, but it will be said, there is certainly a kind of finish in stone-cutting, and in every other art, which *is* meritorious, and which consists in smoothing and refining as much as possible. Yes, assuredly there is a meritorious finish. First, as it has just been said, that which fits a thing for its uses,—as a stone to lie well in its place, or the cog of an engine wheel to play well on another; and, secondly, a finish belonging properly to the arts; but *that* finish does not consist in smoothing or polishing, but in the *completeness of the expression of ideas.* For in painting, there is precisely the same difference between the ends proposed in finishing that there is in manufacture. Some artists finish for the finish' sake; dot their pictures all over, as in some kinds of miniature-painting (when a wash of color would have produced as good an effect); or polish their pictures all over, making the execution so delicate that the touch of the brush cannot be seen, for the sake of the smoothness merely, and of the credit they may thus get for great labor; which kind of execution, seen in great perfection in many works of the Dutch school, and in those of Carlo Dolce, is that polished "language" against which I have spoken at length in various portions of the first volume; nor is it possible to speak of it with too great severity or contempt, where it has been made an ultimate end.

But other artists finish for the impression's sake, not to show their skill, nor to produce a smooth piece of work, but that they may, with each stroke, render clearer the expression of knowledge. And this sort of finish is not, properly speaking, so much *completing* the picture as *adding* to it. It is not that what is painted is more delicately done, but that infinitely *more* is painted. This finish is always noble, and, like all other noblest things, hardly ever understood or appreciated. I must here endeavor, more especially with respect to the state of quarrel between the schools of living painters, to illustrate it thoroughly.

§ 8. In sketching the outline, suppose of the trunk of a tree, as in Plate 2. (opposite) fig. 1., it matters comparatively little whether the outline be given with a bold, or delicate line, so long as it is *outline only*. The work is not more "finished" in one case than in the other; it is only prepared for being seen at a greater or less distance. The real refinement or finish of the line depends, not on its thinness, but on its truly following the contours of the tree, which it conventionally represents; conventionally, I say, because there is no such line round the tree, in reality; and it is set down not as an *imit*ation, but a *limit*ation of the form. But if we are to add shade to it as in fig. 2., the outline must instantly be made proportionally delicate, not for the sake of delicacy as such, but because the outline will now, in many parts, stand not for limitation of form merely, but for a portion of the *shadow* within that form. Now, as a limitation it was true, but as a shadow it would be false, for there is no line of black shadow at the edge of the stem. It must, therefore, be made so delicate as not to detach itself from the rest of the shadow where shadow exists, and only to be seen in the light where limitation is still necessary.

Observe, then, the "finish" of fig. 2. as compared with fig. 1. consists, not in its greater delicacy, but in the addition of a truth (shadow), a removal, in a great degree, of a conventionalism (outline). All true finish consists in one or other of these things. Now, therefore, if we are to "finish" farther we must *know* more or *see* more about the tree. And as the plurality of persons who draw trees know nothing of them, and will not look at them, it results necessarily that the effort to finish is not only vain, but unfinishes—does mischief. In the lower part of the plate, figs. 3, 4, 5, and 6. are fac-similes of pieces of line engraving, meant to represent trunks of trees; 3. and 4. are the commonly accredited types of tree-drawing among engravers in the eighteenth century; 5. and 6. are quite modern; 3. is from a large and important plate by Boydell, from Claude's Molten Calf, dated 1781; 4. by Boydell in 1776, from Rubens's Waggoner; 5. from a bombastic engraving, published about twenty years ago by Meulemeester of Brussels, from Raphael's



2. Drawing of Tree-Stems.

Moses at the Burning Bush; and 6. from the foreground of Miller's Modern Italy, after Turner.*

All these represent, as far as the engraving goes, simply *nothing*. They are not "finished" in any sense but this,—that the paper has been covered with lines. 4. is the best, because, in the original work of Rubens, the lines of the boughs, and their manner of insertion in the trunk, have been so strongly marked, that no engraving could quite efface them; and, inasmuch as it represents these facts in the boughs, that piece of engraving is more finished than the other examples, while its own networked texture is still false and absurd; for there is no texture of this knitted-stocking-like description on boughs; and if there were, it would not be seen in the shadow, but in the light. Miller's is spirited, and looks lustrous, but has no resemblance to the original bough of Turner's, which is pale, and does not glitter. The Netherlands work is, on the whole, the worst; because, in its ridiculous double lines, it adds affectation and conceit to its incapacity. But in all these cases the engravers have worked in total ignorance both of what is meant by "drawing," and of the form of a tree, covering their paper with certain lines, which they have been taught to plough in copper, as a husbandman ploughs in clay.

§ 9. In the next three examples we have instances of endeavors at finish by the hands of artists themselves, marking three stages of knowledge or insight, and three relative stages of finish. Fig. 7. is Claude's (Liber Veritatis, No. 140., facsimile by Boydell). It still displays an appalling ignorance of the forms of trees, but yet is, in mode of execution, better—that is, more finished—than the engravings, because not *altogether* mechanical, and showing some dim, far-away, blundering memory of a few facts in stems, such as their variations of texture and roundness, and bits of young shoots of leaves. 8. is Salvator's, facsimiled from part of his original etching of the Finding of Œdipus. It displays considerable power of handling—not mechanical, but free and firm, and is just so much more finished than any of the others as it displays more intelligence about the way in which boughs gather themselves out of the

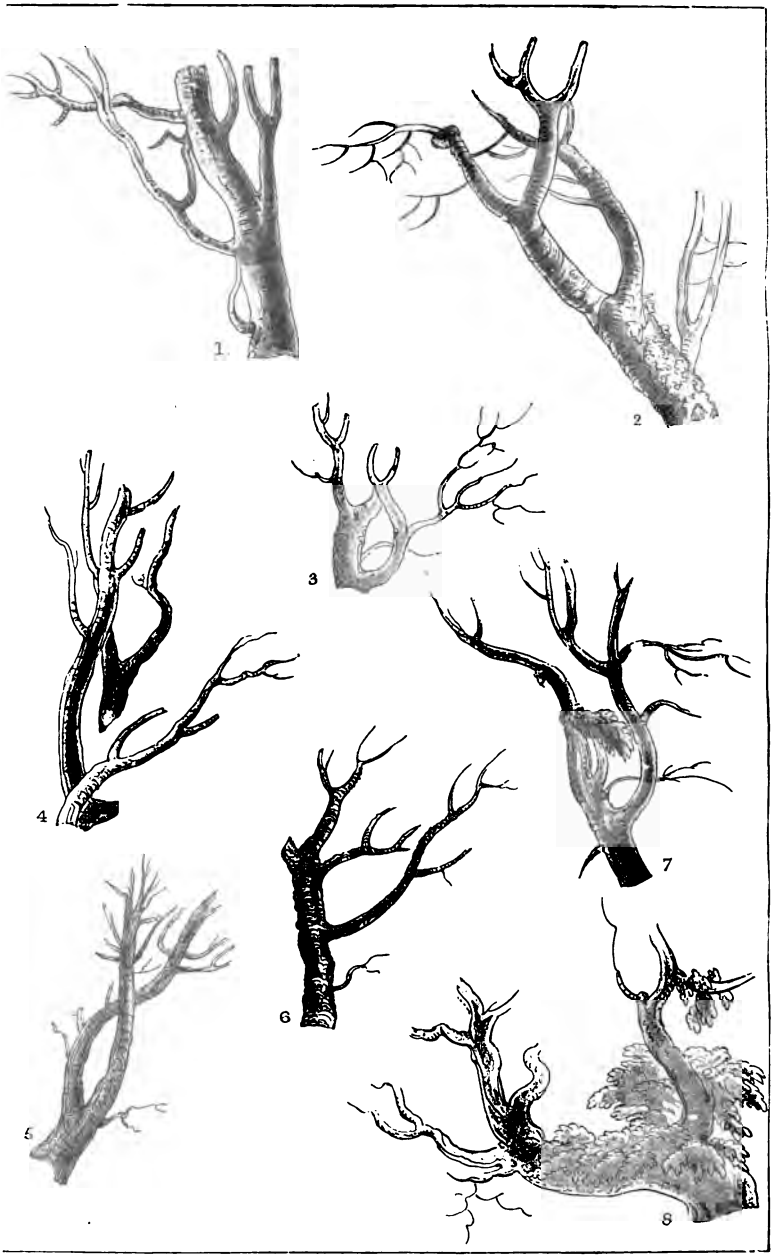
* I take this example from Miller, because, on the whole, he is the best engraver of Turner whom we have.

stem, and about the varying character of their curves. Finally, fig. 9. is good work. It is the root of the apple-tree in Albert Durer's Adam and Eve, and fairly represents the wrinkles of the bark, the smooth portions emergent beneath, and the general anatomy of growth. All the lines used conduce to the representation of these facts; and the work is therefore highly finished. It still, however, leaves out, as not to be represented by such kind of lines, the more delicate gradations of light and shade. I shall now "finish" a little farther, in the next plate (3.), the mere *insertion of the two boughs* outlined in fig. 1. I do this simply by adding assertions of more facts. First, I say that the whole trunk is dark, as compared with the distant sky. Secondly, I say that it is rounded by gradations of shadow, in the various forms shown. And, lastly, I say that (this being a bit of old pine stripped by storm of its bark) the wood is fissured in certain directions, showing its grain, or *muscle*, seen in complicated contortions at the insertion of the arm and elsewhere.

§ 10. Now this piece of work, though yet far from complete (we will better it presently), is yet more finished than any of the others, not because it is more delicate or more skilful, but simply because it tells more truth, and admits fewer fallacies. That which conveys most information, with least inaccuracy, is always the highest finish; and the question whether we prefer art so finished, to art unfinished, is not one of taste at all. It is simply a question whether we like to know much or little; to see accurately or see falsely; and those whose *taste* in art (if they choose so to call it) leads them to like blindness better than sight, and fallacy better than fact, would do well to set themselves to some other pursuit than that of art.

§ 11. In the above plate we have examined chiefly the grain and surface of the boughs; we have not yet noticed the finish of their curvature. If the reader will look back to the No. 7. (Plate 2.), which, in this respect, is the worst of all the set, he will immediately observe the exemplification it gives of Claude's principal theory about trees; namely, that the boughs always parted from each other, two at a time, in the manner of the prongs of an ill-made table-fork. It may, perhaps, not be at once believed that this is indeed Claude's theory respecting

3. Strength of Old Pine.



4. Ramification, according to Claude.

tree-structure, without some farther examples of his practice. I have, therefore, assembled on the next page, Plate 4., some of the most characteristic passages of ramification in the Liber Veritatis; the plates themselves are sufficiently cheap (as they should be) and accessible to nearly every one, so that the accuracy of the facsimiles may be easily tested. I have given in Appendix I. the numbers of the plates from which the examples are taken, and it will be found that they have been rather improved than libelled, only omitting, of course, the surrounding leafage, in order to show accurately the branch-outlines, with which alone we are at present concerned. And it would be difficult to bring together a series more totally futile and foolish, more singularly wrong (as the false griffin was), every way at once; they are stiff, and yet have no strength; curved, and yet have no flexibility; monotonous, and yet disorderly; unnatural, and yet uninventive. They are, in fact, of that commonest kind of tree bough which a child or beginner first draws experimentally; nay, I am well assured, that if this set of branches had been drawn by a schoolboy, "out of his own head," his master would hardly have cared to show them as signs of any promise in him.

§ 12. "Well, but do not the trunks of trees fork, and fork mostly into two arms at a time?"

Yes; but under as stern anatomical law as the limbs of an animal; and those hooked junctions in Plate 4. are just as accurately representative of the branching of wood as this (fig. 2.) is of a neck and shoulders. We should object to such a representation of shoulders, because we have some interest in, and knowledge of, human form; we do not object to Claude's trees, because we have no interest in, nor knowledge of, trees. And if it be still alleged that such work is nevertheless enough to give any one an "idea" of a tree, I answer that it never gave, nor ever will give, an idea of a tree to any one who loves trees; and that, moreover, no idea, whatever its pleasantness, is of the smallest value, which is not founded on simple facts. What pleasantness may be in *wrong*

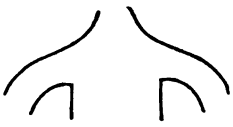
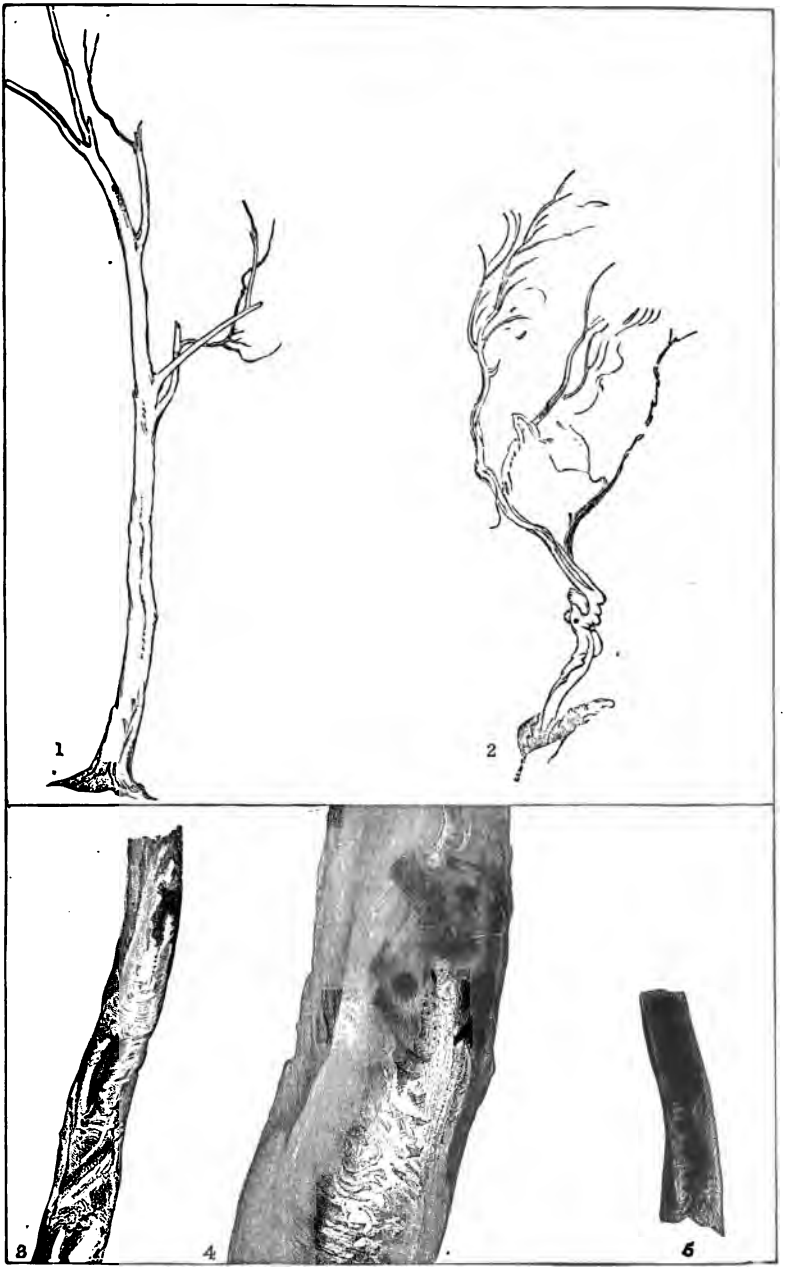


FIG. 2.

ideas we do not here inquire; the only question for us has always been, and must always be, What are the facts?

§ 13. And assuredly those boughs of Claude's are not facts: and every one of their contours is, in the worst sense, unfinished, without even the expectation or faint hope of possible refinement ever coming into them. I do not mean to enter here into the discussion of the characters of ramification; that must be in our separate inquiry into tree-structure generally; but I will merely give one piece of Turner's tree-drawing as an example of what finished work really is, even in outline. In plate 5. opposite, fig. 1. is the contour (stripped, like Claude's, of its foliage) of one of the distant tree-stems in the drawing of Bolton Abbey. In order to show its perfectness better by contrast with bad work (as we have had, I imagine, enough of Claude), I will take a bit of Constable; fig. 2. is the principal tree out of the engraving of the Lock on the Stour (Leslie's Life of Constable). It differs from the Claude outlines merely in being the kind of work which is produced by an uninventive person dashing about idly, with a brush, instead of drawing determinately wrong, with a pen: on the one hand worse than Claude's, in being lazier; on the other a little better in being more free, but, as representative of tree-form, of course still wholly barbarous. It is worth while to turn back to the description of the uninventive painter at work on a tree (Vol. II. chapter on Imaginative Association, § 11), for this trunk of Constable's is curiously illustrative of it. One can almost see him, first bending it to the right; then, having gone long enough to the right, turning to the left; then, having gone long enough to the left, away to the right again; then dividing it; and "because there is another tree in the picture with two long branches (in this case there really is), he knows that this ought to have three or four, which must undulate or go backwards and forwards," &c., &c.

§ 14. Then study the bit of Turner work: note first its quietness, unattractiveness, apparent carelessness whether you look at it or not; next note the subtle curvatures within the narrowest limits, and, when it branches, the unexpected, out of the way things it does, just what nobody could have thought of its doing; shooting out like a letter Y, with a nearly straight



5. Good and Bad Tree-Drawing.

branch, and then correcting its stiffness with a zig-zag behind, so that the boughs, ugly individually, are beautiful in unison. (In what I have hereafter to say about trees, I shall need to dwell much on this character of *unexpectedness*. A bough is never drawn rightly if it is not wayward, so that although, as just now said, quiet at first, not caring to be looked at, the moment it *is* looked at, it seems bent on astonishing you, and doing the last things you expect it to do.) But our present purpose is only to note the *finish* of the Turner *curves*, which, though they seem straight and stiff at first, are, when you look long, seen to be all tremulous, perpetually wavering along every edge into endless melody of change. This is finish in line, in exactly the same sense that a fine melody is finished in the association of its notes.

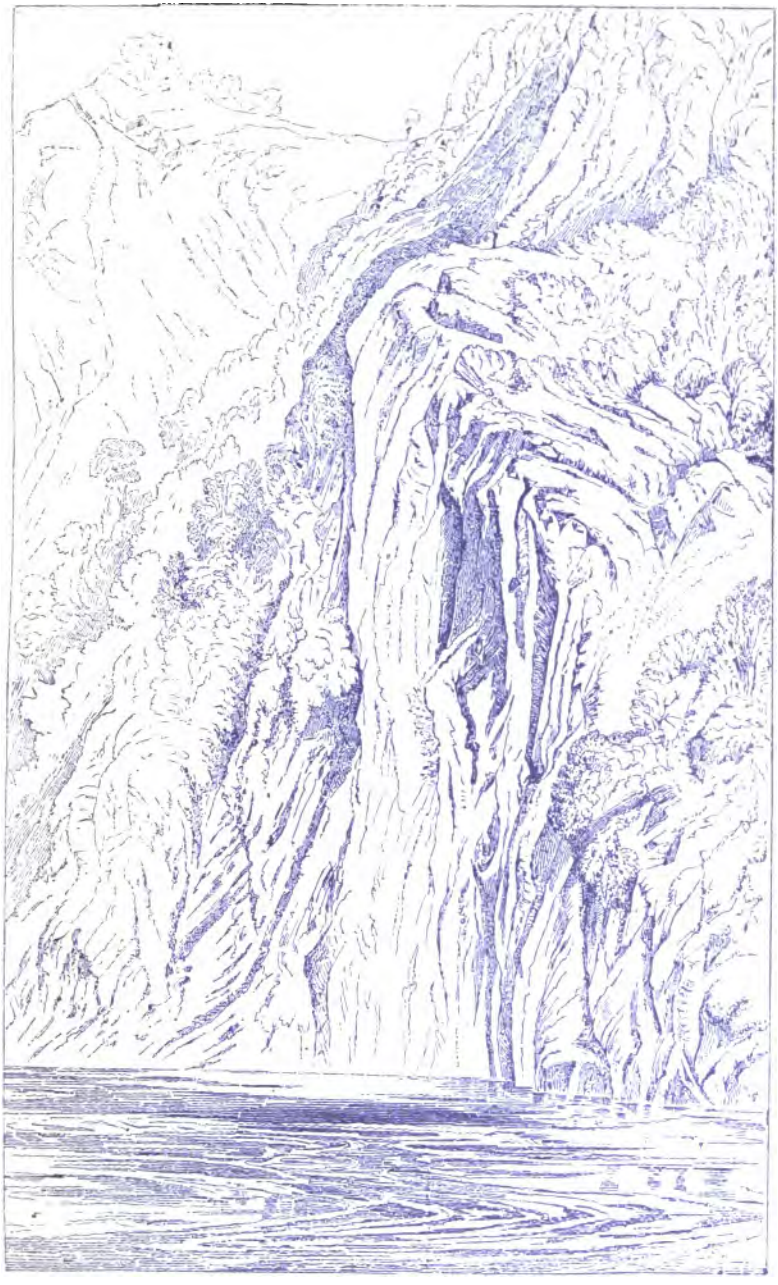
§ 15. And now, farther, let us take a little bit of the Turnerian tree in light and shade. I said above I would better the drawing of that pine trunk, which, though it has incipient shade, and muscular action, has no texture, nor local color. Now, I take about an inch and a half of Turner's ash trunks (one of the nearer ones in this same drawing of Bolton Abbey (fig. 3. Plate 5.), and *this* I cannot better; this is perfectly finished; it is not possible to add more truth to it on that scale. Texture of bark, anatomy of muscle beneath, reflected lights in recessed hollows, stains of dark moss, and flickering shadows from the foliage above, all are there, as clearly as the human hand can mark them. I place a bit of trunk by Constable (fig. 5.),* from another plate in Leslie's Life of him (a dell in Helmingham Park, Suffolk), for the sake of the same comparison in shade that we have above in contour. You see Constable does not know whether he is drawing moss or shadow: those dark touches in the middle are confused in his mind between the dark stains on the trunk and its dark side; there is

* Fig. 5. is not, however, so *lustrous* as Constable's; I cannot help this, having given the original plate to my good friend Mr. Cousen, with strict charge to facsimile it faithfully: but the figure is all the fairer, as a representation of Constable's art, for those mezzotints in Leslie's life of him have many qualities of drawing which are quite wanting in Constable's blots of color. The comparison shall be made elaborately, between picture and picture, in the section on Vegetation.

no anatomy, no cast shadow, nothing but idle sweeps of the brush, vaguely circular. The thing is much darker than Turner's, but it is not, therefore, finished; it is only blackened. And "to blacken" is indeed the proper word for all attempts at finish without knowledge. All true finish is *added fact;* and Turner's word for finishing a picture was always this significant one, "carry forward." But labor without added knowledge can only blacken or stain a picture, it cannot finish it.

§ 16. And this is especially to be remembered as we pass from comparatively large and distant objects, such as this single trunk, to the more divided and nearer features of foreground. Some degree of ignorance may be hidden, in completing what is far away; but there is no concealment possible in close work, and darkening instead of finishing becomes then the engraver's only possible resource. It has always been a wonderful thing to me to hear people talk of making foregrounds "vigorous," "marked," "forcible," and so on. If you will lie down on your breast on the next bank you come to (which is bringing it *close* enough, I should think, to give it all the force it is capable of), you will see, in the cluster of leaves and grass close to your face, something as delicate as this, which I have actually so drawn, on the opposite page, a mystery of soft shadow in the depths of the grass, with indefinite forms of leaves, which you cannot trace or count, within it, and out of that, the nearer leaves coming in every subtle gradation of tender light and flickering form, quite beyond all delicacy of pencilling to follow; and yet you will rise up from that bank (certainly not making it appear coarser by drawing a little back from it), and profess to represent it by a few blots of "forcible" foreground color. "Well, but I cannot draw every leaf that I see on the bank." No, for as we saw, at the beginning of this chapter, that no human work could be finished so as to express the *delicacy* of nature, so neither can it be finished so as to express the *redundance* of nature. Accept that necessity; but do not deny it; do not call your work finished, when you have, in engraving, substituted a confusion of coarse black scratches, or in water-color a few edgy blots, for ineffable organic beauty. Follow that beauty as far as you can, remembering that just as far as you see, know, and represent it, just so far your work is fin-

6. Foreground Leafage.



12. The Shores of Wharfe.

J. Ruskin after Masaccio. J. H. Le Keux

13. First Mountain Naturalism.

14. The Lombard Apennine.

d; as far as you fall short of it, your work is *un*finished; as far as you substitute any other thing for it, your work oiled.

§ 17. How far Turner followed it, is not easily shown; for inish is so delicate as to be nearly uncopiable. I have just it was not possible to finish that ash trunk of his, farther, ch a scale.* By using a magnifying-glass, and giving the help to the spectator, it might perhaps be possible to add exhibit a few more details; but even as it is, I cannot by engraving express all that there is in that piece of tree-k, on the same scale. I *have* therefore magnified the upper of it in fig 4. (Plate 5.), so that the reader may better see beautiful lines of curvature into which even its slightest s and spots are cast. Every quarter of an inch in Turner's ings will bear magnifying in the same way; much of the work in them can hardly be traced, except by the keenest until it is magnified. In his painting of Ivy Bridge,† eins are drawn on the wings of a butterfly, not above three in diameter; and in one of his smaller drawings of Scar-gh, in my own possession, the muscle-shells on the beach ounded, and some shown as shut, some as open, though are as large as one of the letters of this type; and yet this man who was thought to belong to the "dashing" school, lly because most people had not patience or delicacy of enough to trace his endless detail.

18. "Suppose it was so," perhaps the reader replies; l I do not like detail so delicate that it can hardly be " Then you like nothing in Nature (for you will find she s carries her detail too far to be traced). This point, ver, we shall examine hereafter; it is not the question now her we *like* finish or not; our only inquiry here is, what *means;* and I trust the reader is beginning to be satisfied t does indeed mean nothing but consummate and accumu-truth, and that our old monotonous test must still serve re as elsewhere. And it will become us to consider seri-

14. The Lombard Apennine.

* It is of the exact size of the original, the whole drawing being about ches by 11 in.

† An oil painting (about 3 ft. by 4 ft. 6 in.), and very broad in its masses. possession of E. Bicknell, Esq.

14. The Lombard Apennine.

ished; as far as you fall short of it, your work is *un*finished; and as far as you substitute any other thing for it, your work is spoiled.

§ 17. How far Turner followed it, is not easily shown; for his finish is so delicate as to be nearly uncopiable. I have just said it was not possible to finish that ash trunk of his, farther, on such a scale.* By using a magnifying-glass, and giving the same help to the spectator, it might perhaps be possible to add and exhibit a few more details; but even as it is, I cannot by line engraving express all that there is in that piece of tree-trunk, on the same scale. I *have* therefore magnified the upper part of it in fig 4. (Plate 5.), so that the reader may better see the beautiful lines of curvature into which even its slightest shades and spots are cast. Every quarter of an inch in Turner's drawings will bear magnifying in the same way; much of the finer work in them can hardly be traced, except by the keenest sight, until it is magnified. In his painting of Ivy Bridge,† the veins are drawn on the wings of a butterfly, not above three lines in diameter; and in one of his smaller drawings of Scarborough, in my own possession, the muscle-shells on the beach are rounded, and some shown as shut, some as open, though none are as large as one of the letters of this type; and yet this is the man who was thought to belong to the "dashing" school, literally because most people had not patience or delicacy of sight enough to trace his endless detail.

§ 18. "Suppose it was so," perhaps the reader replies; "still I do not like detail so delicate that it can hardly be seen." Then you like nothing in Nature (for you will find she always carries her detail too far to be traced). This point, however, we shall examine hereafter; it is not the question now whether we *like* finish or not; our only inquiry here is, what finish *means;* and I trust the reader is beginning to be satisfied that it does indeed mean nothing but consummate and accumulated truth, and that our old monotonous test must still serve us here as elsewhere. And it will become us to consider seri-

* It is of the exact size of the original, the whole drawing being about 15½ inches by 11 in.

† An oil painting (about 3 ft. by 4 ft. 6 in.), and very broad in its masses. In the possession of E. Bicknell, Esq.

14. The Lombard Apennine.

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ously why (if indeed it be so) we dislike this kind of finish—dislike an accumulation of truth. For assuredly all authority is against us, and *no truly great man can be named in the arts—but it is that of one who finished to his utmost.* Take Leonardo, Michael Angelo, and Raphael for a triad, to begin with. *They* all completed their detail with such subtlety of touch and gradation, that, in a careful drawing by any of the three, you cannot see where the pencil ceased to touch the paper; the stroke of it is so tender, that, when you look close to the drawing you can see nothing; you only see the effect of it a little way back! Thus tender in execution,—and so complete in detail, that Leonardo must needs draw *every several vein in the little agates* and pebbles of the gravel under the feet of the St. Anne in the Louvre. Take a quartett after the triad—Titian, Tintoret, Bellini, and Veronese. Examine the vine-leaves of the Bacchus and Ariadne, (Titian's) in the National Gallery; examine the borage blossoms, painted petal by petal, though lying loose on the table, in Titian's Supper at Emmaus, in the Louvre, or the snail-shells on the ground in his Entombment;* examine the separately designed patterns on every drapery of Veronese, in his Marriage in Cana; go to Venice and see how Tintoret paints the strips of black bark on the birch trunk that sustains the platform in his Adoration of the Magi: how Bellini fills the rents of his ruined walls with the most exquisite clusters of the erba della Madonna.† You will find them all in a tale. Take a quintett after the quartett—Francia, Angelico, Durer, Hemling, Perugino,—and still the witness is one, still the same striving in all to such utmost perfection as their knowledge and hand could reach.

Who shall gainsay these men? Above all, who shall gainsay them when they and Nature say precisely the same thing? For where does Nature pause in *her* finishing—that finishing which consists not in the smoothing of surface, but the filling of space, and the multiplication of life and thought?

Who shall gainsay them? I, for one, dare not; but accept their teaching, with Nature's, in all humbleness.

* These snail-shells are very notable, occurring as they do in, perhaps, the very grandest and broadest of all Titian's compositions.

† Linaria Cymbalaria, the ivy-leaved toadflax of English gardens.

"But is there, then, no good in any work which does not pretend to perfectness? Is there no saving clause from this terrible requirement of completion? And if there be none, what is the meaning of all you have said elsewhere about rudeness as the glory of Gothic work, and, even a few pages back, about the danger of finishing, for our modern workmen?"

Indeed there are many saving clauses, and there is much good in imperfect work. But we had better cast the consideration of these drawbacks and exceptions into another chapter, and close this one, without obscuring, in any wise, our broad conclusion that "finishing" means in art simply "telling more truth;" and that whatever we have in any sort begun wisely, it is good to finish thoroughly.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE USE OF PICTURES.

§ 1. I AM afraid this will be a difficult chapter; one of drawbacks, qualifications, and exceptions. But the more I see of useful truths, the more I find that, like human beings, they are eminently biped; and, although, as far as apprehended by human intelligence, they are usually seen in a crane-like posture, standing on one leg, whenever they are to be stated so as to maintain themselves against all attack it is quite necessary they should stand on two, and have their complete balance on opposite fulcra.

§ 2. I doubt not that one objection, with which as well as with another we may begin, has struck the reader very forcibly, after comparing the illustrations above given from Turner, Constable, and Claude. He will wonder how it was that Turner, finishing in this exquisite way, and giving truths by the thousand, where other painters gave only one or two, yet, of all painters, seemed to obtain least acknowledgeable resemblance to nature, so that the world cried out upon him for a madman, at the moment when he was giving exactly the highest and most consummate truth that had ever been seen in landscape.

And he will wonder why still there seems reason for this outcry. Still, after what analysis and proof of his being right have as yet been given, the reader may perhaps be saying to himself: "All this reasoning is of no use to me. Turner does *not* give me the idea of nature; I do not feel before one of his pictures as I should in the real scene. Constable takes me out into the shower, and Claude into the sun; and De Wint makes me feel as if I were walking in the fields; but Turner keeps me in the house, and I know always that I am looking at a picture."

I might answer to this; Well, what else *should* he do? If

you want to feel as if you were in a shower, cannot you go and get wet without help from Constable? If you want to feel as if you were walking in the fields, cannot you go and walk in them without help from De Wint? But if you want to sit in your room and look at a beautiful picture, why should you blame the artist for giving you one? This *was* the answer actually made to me by various journalists, when first I showed that Turner was truer than other painters: "Nay," said they, "we do not want truth, we want something else than truth; we would not have nature, but something better than nature."

§ 3. I do not mean to accept that answer, although it seems at this moment to make for me: I have never accepted it. As I raise my eyes from the paper, to think over the curious mingling in it, of direct error, and far away truth, I see upon the room-walls, first, Turner's drawing of the chain of the Alps from the Superga above Turin; then a study of a block of gneiss at Chamouni, with the purple Aiguilles-Rouges behind it; another, of the towers of the Swiss Fribourg, with a cluster of pine forest behind them; then another Turner, Isola Bella, with the blue opening of the St. Gothard in the distance; and then a fair bit of thirteenth century illumination, depicting, at the top of the page, the Salutation; and beneath, the painter who painted it, sitting in his little convent cell, with a legend above him to this effect—

"ego Johes scpsi hunc librum."

I, John, wrote this book.

None of these things are bad pieces of art; and yet,—if it were offered to me to have, instead of them, so many windows, out of which I should see, first, the real chain of the Alps from the Superga; then the real block of gneiss, and Aiguilles-Rouges; then the real towers of Fribourg, and pine forest; the real Isola Bella; and, finally, the true Mary and Elizabeth; and beneath them, the actual old monk at work in his cell,—I would very unhesitatingly change my five pictures for the five windows; and so, I apprehend, would most people, not, it seems to me, unwisely.

"Well, then," the reader goes on to question me, "the

more closely the picture resembles such a window the better it must be?"

Yes.

"Then if Turner does not give me the impression of such a window, that is of Nature, there must be something wrong in Turner?"

Yes.

"And if Constable and De Wint give me the impression of such a window, there must be something right in Constable and De Wint?"

Yes.

"And something more right than in Turner?"

No.

"Will you explain yourself?"

I *have* explained myself, long ago, and that fully; perhaps too fully for the simple sum of the explanation to be remembered. If the reader will glance back to, and in the present state of our inquiry, reconsider in the first volume, Part I. Sec. I. Chap. V., and Part II. Sec. I. Chap. VII., he will find our present difficulties anticipated. There are some truths, easily obtained, which give a deceptive resemblance to Nature; others only to be obtained with difficulty, which cause no deception, but give inner and deep resemblance. These two classes of truths cannot be obtained together; choice must be made between them. The bad painter gives the cheap deceptive resemblance. The good painter gives the precious non-deceptive resemblance. Constable perceives in a landscape that the grass is wet, the meadows flat, and the boughs shady; that is to say, about as much as, I suppose, might in general be apprehended, between them, by an intelligent fawn and a skylark. Turner perceives at a glance the whole sum of visible truth open to human intelligence. So Berghem perceives nothing in a figure, beyond the flashes of light on the folds of its dress; but Michael Angelo perceives every flash of thought that is passing through its spirit; and Constable and Berghem may imitate windows; Turner and Michael Angelo can by no means imitate windows. But Turner and Michael Angelo are nevertheless the best.

§ 4. "Well but," the reader persists, "you admitted just

now that because Turner did not get his work to look like a window there was something wrong in him."

I did so; if he were quite right he would have *all* truth, low as well as high; that is, he would be Nature and not Turner; but that is impossible to man. There is much that is wrong in him; much that is infinitely wrong in all human effort. But, nevertheless, in some an infinity of Betterness above other human effort.

"Well, but you said you would change your Turners for windows, why not, therefore, for Constables?"

Nay, I did not say that I would change them for windows *merely*, but for windows which commanded the chain of the Alps and Isola Bella. That is to say, for all the truth that there is in Turner, and all the truth besides which is not in him; but I would not change them for Constables, to have a small piece of truth which is not in Turner, and none of the mighty truth which there is.

§ 5. Thus far, then, though the subject is one requiring somewhat lengthy explanation, it involves no real difficulty. There is not the slightest inconsistency in the mode in which throughout this work I have desired the relative merits of painters to be judged. I have always said, he who is closest to Nature is best. All rules are useless, all genius is useless, all labor is useless, if you do not give facts; the more facts you give the greater you are; and there is no fact so unimportant as to be prudently despised, if it be possible to represent it. Nor, but that I have long known the truth of Herbert's lines,

> "Some men are
> Full of themselves, and answer their own notion,"

would it have been without intense surprise that I heard querulous readers asking, "how it was possible" that I could praise Pre-Raphaelitism and Turner also. For, from the beginning of this book to this page of it, I have never praised Turner highly for any other cause than that he *gave facts* more *delicately*, more Pre-Raphaelitically, than other men. Careless readers, who dashed at the descriptions and missed the arguments, took up their own conceptions of the cause of my liking Turner, and said to themselves: "Turner cannot draw, Turner is generaliz-

ing, vague, visionary; and the Pre-Raphaelites are hard and distinct. How can any one like both?" * But *I* never said that Turner could not draw. *I* never said that he was vague or visionary. What *I* said was, that nobody had ever drawn so well: that nobody was so certain, so *un*-visionary; that nobody had ever given so many hard and downright facts. Glance back to the first volume, and note the expressions now. "He is the only painter who ever drew a mountain or a stone; † the only painter who can draw the stem of a tree; the only painter who has ever drawn the sky, previous artists having only drawn it typically or partially, but he absolutely and universally." Note how he is praised in his rock drawing for "not selecting a pretty or interesting morsel here or there, but giving the whole truth, with all the relations of its parts." ‡ Observe how the *great virtue* of the landscape of Cima da Conegliano and the early sacred painters is said to be giving "entire, exquisite, humble, realization—a strawberry-plant in the foreground with a blossom, *and a berry just set, and one half ripe, and one ripe,* all patiently and innocently painted from the *real thing, and*

* People of any sense, however, confined themselves to wonder. I think it was only in the Art Journal of September 1st, 1854, that any writer had the meanness to charge me with insincerity. "The pictures of Turner and the works of the Pre-Raphaelites are the very antipodes of each other; it is, therefore, impossible that one and the same individual can with any *show of sincerity* [Note, by the way, the Art-Union has no idea that *real* sincerity is a thing existent or possible at all. All that it expects or hopes of human nature is, that it should have *show* of sincerity,] stand forth as the thick and thin [I perceive the writer intends to teach me English, as well as honesty,] eulogist of both. With a certain knowledge of art, such as may be possessed by the author of English Painters, [Note, farther, that the eminent critic does not so much as know the title of the book he is criticising,] it is not difficult to praise any bad or mediocre picture that may be qualified with extravagance or mysticism. This author owes the public a heavy debt of explanation, which a lifetime spent in ingenious reconciliations would not suffice to discharge. A fervent admiration of certain pictures by Turner, and, at the same time, of some of the severest productions of the Pre-Raphaelites, presents an insuperable problem to persons whose taste in art is regulated by definite principles."

† Part II. Sec. I. Chap. VII. § 46.

‡ Part II. Sec. IV. Chap. IV. § 23., and Part II. Sec. I. Chap. VII. § 9. The whole of the Preface to the Second Edition is written to maintain this one point of specific detail against the advocates of generalization.

therefore most divine." Then re-read the following paragraph (§ 10.), carefully, and note its conclusion, that the thoroughly great men are those who have done everything thoroughly, and who have never despised anything, however small, of God's making; with the instance given of Wordsworth's daisy casting its shadow on a stone; and the following sentence, "Our painters must come to this before they have done their duty." And yet, when our painters *did* come to this, did do their duty, and did paint the daisy with its shadow (this passage having been written years before Pre-Raphaelitism was thought of), people wondered how I could possibly like what was neither more nor less than the precise fulfilment of my own most earnest exhortations and highest hopes.

§ 6. Thus far, then, all I have been saying is absolutely consistent, and tending to one simple end. Turner is praised for his truth and finish; that truth of which I am beginning to give examples. Pre-Raphaelitism is praised for its truth and finish; and the whole duty inculcated upon the artist is that of being in all respects as like Nature as possible.

And yet this is not all I have to do. There is more than this to be inculcated upon the student, more than this to be admitted or established before the foundations of just judgment can be laid.

For, observe, although I believe any sensible person would exchange his pictures, however good, for windows, he would not feel, and ought not to feel, that the arrangement was *entirely* gainful to him. He would feel it was an exchange of a less good of one kind, for a greater of another kind, but that it was definitely *exchange*, not pure gain, not merely getting more truth instead of less. The picture would be a serious loss; something gone which the actual landscape could never restore, though it might give something better in its place, as age may give to the heart something better than its youthful delusion, but cannot give again the sweetness of that delusion.

§ 7. What is this in the picture which is precious to us, and yet is not natural? Hitherto our arguments have tended, on the whole, somewhat to the depreciation of art; and the reader may every now and then, so far as he has been convinced by them, have been inclined to say, "Why not give up this whole

science of Mockery at once, since its only virtue is in representing facts, and it cannot, at best, represent them completely, besides being liable to all manner of shortcomings and dishonesties,—why not keep to the facts, to real fields, and hills, and men, and let this dangerous painting alone?"

No, it would not be well to do this. Painting has its peculiar virtues, not only consistent with but even resulting from, its shortcomings and weaknesses. Let us see what these virtues are.

§ 8. I must ask permission, as I have sometimes done before, to begin apparently a long way from the point.

Not long ago, as I was leaving one of the towns of Switzerland early in the morning, I saw in the clouds behind the houses an Alp which I did not know, a grander Alp than any I knew, nobler than the Schreckhorn or the Mönch; terminated, as it seemed, on one side by a precipice of almost unimaginable height; on the other, sloping away for leagues in one field of lustrous ice, clear and fair and blue, flashing here and there into silver under the morning sun. For a moment I received a sensation of as much sublimity as any natural object could possibly excite; the next moment, I saw that my unknown Alp was the glass roof of one of the workshops of the town, rising above its nearer houses, and rendered aërial and indistinct by some pure blue wood smoke which rose from intervening chimneys.

It is evident, that so far as the mere delight of the eye was concerned, the glass roof was here equal, or at least equal for a moment, to the Alp. Whether the power of the object over the heart was to be small or great, depended altogether upon what it was understood for, upon its being taken possession of and apprehended in its full nature, either as a granite mountain or a group of panes of glass; and thus, always, the real majesty of the appearance of the thing to us, depends upon the degree in which we ourselves possess the power of understanding it,—that penetrating, possession taking power of the imagination, which has been long ago defined * as the very life of the man, considered as a *seeing* creature. For though the casement had indeed

* Vol. II. Chapter on Penetrative Imagination.

been an Alp, there are many persons on whose minds it would have produced no more effect than the glass roof. It would have been to them a glittering object of a certain apparent length and breadth, and whether of glass or ice, whether twenty feet in length, or twenty leagues, would have made no difference to them; or, rather, would not have been in any wise conceived or considered by them. Examine the nature of your own emotion (if you feel it) at the sight of the Alp, and you find all the brightness of that emotion hanging, like dew on gossamer, on a curious web of subtle fancy and imperfect knowledge. First, you have a vague idea of its size, coupled with wonder at the work of the great Builder of its walls and foundations, then an apprehension of its eternity, a pathetic sense of its perpetualness, and your own transientness, as of the grass upon its sides; then, and in this very sadness, a sense of strange companionship with past generations in seeing what they saw. They did not see the clouds that are floating over your head; nor the cottage wall on the other side of the field; nor the road by which you are travelling. But they saw *that*. The wall of granite in the heavens was the same to them as to you. They have ceased to look upon it; you will soon cease to look also, and the granite wall will be for others. Then, mingled with these more solemn imaginations, come the understandings of the gifts and glories of the Alps, the fancying forth of all the fountains that well from its rocky walls, and strong rivers that are born out of its ice, and of all the pleasant valleys that wind between its cliffs, and all the châlets that gleam among its clouds, and happy farmsteads couched upon its pastures; while together with the thoughts of these, rise strange sympathies with all the unknown of human life, and happiness, and death, signified by that narrow white flame of the everlasting snow, seen so far in the morning sky.

These images, and far more than these, lie at the root of the emotion which you feel at the sight of the Alp. You may not trace them in your heart, for there is a great deal more in your heart, of evil and good, than you ever can trace; but they stir you and quicken you for all that. Assuredly, so far as you feel more at beholding the snowy mountain than any other object of the same sweet silvery grey, these are the kind of images which

cause you to do so; and, observe, these are nothing more than a greater apprehension of the *facts* of the thing. We call the power "Imagination," because it imagines or conceives; but it is only noble imagination if it imagines or conceives *the truth*. And, according to the degree of knowledge possessed, and of sensibility to the pathetic or impressive character of the things known, will be the degree of this imaginative delight.

§ 9. But the main point to be noted at present is, that if the imagination can be excited to this its peculiar work, it matters comparatively little what it is excited by. If the smoke had not cleared partially away, the glass roof might have pleased me as well as an alp, until I had quite lost sight of it; and if, in a picture, the imagination can be once caught, and, without absolute affront from some glaring fallacy, set to work in its own field, the imperfection of the historical details themselves is, to the spectator's enjoyment, of small consequence.

Hence it is, that poets and men of strong feeling in general, are apt to be among the very worst judges of painting. The slightest hint is enough for them. Tell them that a white stroke means a ship, and a black stain, a thunderstorm, and they will be perfectly satisfied with both, and immediately proceed to remember all that they ever felt about ships and thunderstorms, attributing the whole current and fulness of their own feelings to the painter's work; while probably, if the picture be really good, and full of stern fact, the poet, or man of feeling, will find some of its fact *in his way*, out of the particular course of his own thoughts,—be offended at it, take to criticising and wondering at it, detect, at last, some imperfection in it,—such as must be inherent in all human work,—and so finally quarrel with, and reject the whole thing. Thus, Wordsworth writes many sonnets to Sir George Beaumont and Haydon, none to Sir Joshua or to Turner.

§ 10. Hence also the error into which many superficial artists fall, in speaking of "addressing the imagination" as the only end of art. It is quite true that the imagination must be addressed; but it may be very sufficiently addressed by the stain left by an ink-bottle thrown at the wall. The thrower has little credit, though an imaginative observer may find, perhaps, more to amuse him in the erratic nigrescence than in many a labored

picture. And thus, in a slovenly or ill-finished picture, it is no credit to the artist that he has "addressed the imagination;" nor is the success of such an appeal any criterion whatever of the merit of the work. The duty of an artist is not only to address and awaken, but to *guide* the imagination; and there is no safe guidance but that of simple concurrence with fact. It is no matter that the picture takes the fancy of A. or B., that C. writes sonnets to it, and D. feels it to be divine. This is still the only question for the artist, or for us:—"Is it a fact? Are things really so? Is the picture an Alp among pictures, full, firm, eternal; or only a glass house, frail, hollow, contemptible, demolishable; calling, at all honest hands, for detection and demolition?"

§ 11. Hence it is also that so much grievous difficulty stands in the way of obtaining *real opinion* about pictures at all. Tell any man, of the slightest imaginative power, that such and such a picture is good, and means this or that: tell him, for instance, that a Claude is good, and that it means trees, and grass, and water; and forthwith, whatever faith, virtue, humility, and imagination there are in the man, rise up to help Claude, and to declare that indeed it is all "excellent good, i'faith;" and whatever in the course of his life he has felt of pleasure in trees and grass, he will begin to reflect upon and enjoy anew, supposing all the while it is the picture he is enjoying. Hence, when once a painter's reputation is accredited, it must be a stubborn kind of person indeed whom he will not please, or seem to please; for all the vain and weak people pretend to be pleased with him, for their own credit's sake, and all the humble and imaginative people seriously and honestly fancy they *are* pleased with him, deriving indeed, very certainly, delight from his work, but a delight which, if they were kept in the same temper, they would equally derive (and, indeed, constantly do derive) from the grossest daub that can be manufactured in imitation by the pawnbroker. Is, therefore, the pawnbroker's imitation as good as the original? Not so. There is the certain test of goodness and badness, which I am always striving to get people to use. As long as they are satisfied if they find their feelings pleasantly stirred and their fancy gaily occupied, so long there is for them no

good, no bad. Anything may please, or anything displease, them; and their entire manner of thought and talking about art is mockery, and all their judgments are laborious injustices. But let them, in the teeth of their pleasure or displeasure, simply put the calm question,—Is it so? Is that the way a stone is shaped, the way a cloud is wreathed, the way a leaf is veined? and they are safe. They will do no more injustice to themselves nor to other men; they will learn to whose guidance they may trust their imagination, and from whom they must for ever withhold its reins.

§ 12. "Well, but why have you dragged in this poor spectator's imagination at all, if you have nothing more to say for it than this; if you are merely going to abuse it, and go back to your tiresome facts?"

Nay; I am not going to abuse it. On the contrary, I have to assert, in a temper profoundly venerant of it, that though we must not suppose everything is right when this is aroused, we may be sure that something is wrong when this is *not* aroused. The something wrong may be in the spectator or in the picture; and if the picture be demonstrably in accordance with truth, the odds are, that it is in the spectator; but there is wrong somewhere; for the work of the picture is indeed eminently to get at this imaginative power in the beholder, and all its facts are of no use whatever if it does not. No matter how much truth it tells if the hearer be asleep. Its first work is to wake him, then to teach him.

§ 13. Now, observe, while, as it penetrates into the nature of things, the imagination is preëminently a beholder of things *as* they *are*, it is, in its creative function, an eminent beholder of things *when* and *where* they are NOT; a seer, that is, in the prophetic sense, calling "the things that are not as though they were," and for ever delighting to dwell on that which is not tangibly present. And its great function being the calling forth, or back, that which is not visible to bodily sense, it has of course been made to take delight in the fulfilment of its proper function, and preëminently to enjoy, and spend its energy, on things past and future, or out of sight, rather than things present, or in sight. So that if the imagination is to be called to take delight in any object, it will not be always well, if we

can help it, to put the *real* object there, before it. The imagination would on the whole rather have it *not* there ;—the reality and substance are rather in the imagination's way ; it would think a good deal more of the thing if it could not see it. Hence, that strange and sometimes fatal charm, which there is in all things as long as we wait for them, and the moment we have lost them ; but which fades while we possess them ;—that sweet bloom of all that is far away, which perishes under our touch. Yet the feeling of this is not a weakness ; it is one of the most glorious gifts of the human mind, making the whole infinite future, and imperishable past, a richer inheritance, if faithfully inherited, than the changeful, frail, fleeting present ; it is also one of the many witnesses in us to the truth that these present and tangible things are not meant to satisfy us. The instinct becomes a weakness only when it is weakly indulged, and when the faculty which was intended by God to give back to us what we have lost, and gild for us what is to come, is so perverted as only to darken what we possess. But, perverted or pure, the instinct itself is everlasting, and the substantial presence even of the things which we love the best, will inevitably and for ever be found wanting in *one* strange and tender charm, which belonged to the dreams of them.

§ 14. Another character of the imagination is equally constant, and, to our present inquiry, of yet greater importance. It is eminently a *weariable* faculty, eminently delicate, and incapable of bearing fatigue ; so that if we give it too many objects at a time to employ itself upon, or very grand ones for a long time together, it fails under the effort, becomes jaded, exactly as the limbs do by bodily fatigue, and incapable of answering any farther appeal till it has had rest. And this is the real nature of the weariness which is so often felt in travelling, from seeing too much. It is not that the monotony and number of the beautiful things seen have made them valueless, but that the imaginative power has been overtaxed ; and, instead of letting it rest, the traveller, wondering to find himself dull, and incapable of admiration, seeks for something more admirable, excites, and torments, and drags the poor fainting imagination up by the shoulders : " Look at this, and look at that, and this more wonderful still !"—until the imaginative faculty faints utterly

away, beyond all farther torment or pleasure, dead for many a day to come; and the despairing prodigal takes to horse-racing in the Campagna, good now for nothing else than that; whereas, if the imagination had only been laid down on the grass, among simple things, and left quiet for a little while, it would have come to itself gradually, recovered its strength and color, and soon been fit for work again. So that, whenever the imagination is tired, it is necessary to find for it something, not *more* admirable but *less* admirable; such as in that weak state it can deal with; then give it peace, and it will recover.

§ 15. I well recollect the walk on which I first found out this; it was on the winding road from Sallenche, sloping up the hills towards St. Gervais, one cloudless Sunday afternoon. The road circles softly between bits of rocky bank and mounded pasture; little cottages and chapels gleaming out from among the trees at every turn. Behind me, some leagues in length, rose the jagged range of the mountains of the Réposoir; on the other side of the valley, the mass of the Aiguille de Varens, heaving its seven thousand feet of cliff into the air at a single effort, its gentle gift of waterfall, the Nant d'Arpenaz, like a pillar of cloud at its feet; Mont Blanc and all its aiguilles, one silver flame, in front of me; marvellous blocks of mossy granite and dark glades of pine around me; but I could enjoy nothing, and could not for a long while make out what was the matter with me, until at last I discovered that if I confined myself to one thing,—and that a little thing,—a tuft of moss, or a single crag at the top of the Varens, or a wreath or two of foam at the bottom of the Nant d'Arpenaz, I began to enjoy it directly, because then I had mind enough to put into the thing, and the enjoyment arose from the quantity of the imaginative energy I could bring to bear upon it; but when I looked at or thought of all together, moss, stones, Varens, Nant d'Arpenaz, and Mont Blanc, I had not mind enough to give to all, and none were of any value. The conclusion which would have been formed, upon this, by a German philosopher, would have been that the Mont Blanc *was* of no value; that he and his imagination only were of value; that the Mont Blanc, in fact, except so far as he was able to look at it, could not be considered as having any existence. But the only conclusion which oc-

curred to me as reasonable under the circumstances (I have seen no ground for altering it since) was, that I was an exceedingly small creature, much tired, and, at the moment, not a little stupid, for whom a blade of grass, or a wreath of foam, was quite food enough and to spare, and that if I tried to take any more, I should make myself ill. Whereupon, associating myself fraternally with some ants, who were deeply interested in the conveyance of some small sticks over the road, and rather, as I think they generally are, in too great a hurry about it, I returned home in a little while with great contentment, thinking how well it was ordered that, as Mont Blanc and his pine forests could not be everywhere, nor all the world come to see them, the human mind, on the whole, should enjoy itself most surely in an ant-like manner, and be happy and busy with the bits of stick and grains of crystal that fall in its way to be handled, in daily duty.

§ 16. It follows evidently from the first of these characters of the imagination, its dislike of substance and presence, that a picture has in some measure even an advantage with us in not being real. The imagination rejoices in having something to do, springs up with all its willing power, flattered and happy; and ready with its fairest colors and most tender pencilling, to prove itself worthy of the trust, and exalt into sweet supremacy the shadow that has been confided to its fondness. And thus, so far from its being at all an object to the painter to make his work look real, he ought to dread such a consummation as the loss of one of its most precious claims upon the heart. So far from striving to convince the beholder that what he sees is substance, his mind should be to what he paints as the fire to the body on the pile, burning away the ashes, leaving the unconquerable shade—an immortal dream. So certain is this, that the slightest local success in giving the deceptive appearance of reality—the imitation, for instance, of the texture of a bit of wood, with its grain in relief—will instantly destroy the charm of a whole picture; the imagination feels itself insulted and injured, and passes by with cold contempt; nay, however beautiful the whole scene may be, as of late in much of our highly wrought painting for the stage, the mere fact of its being deceptively real is enough to make us tire of it; we may be sur-

prised and pleased for a moment, but the imagination will not on those terms be persuaded to give any of its help, and, in a quarter of an hour, we wish the scene would change.

§ 17. "Well, but then, what becomes of all these long dogmatic chapters of yours about giving nothing but the truth, and as much truth as possible?"

The chapters are all quite right. "Nothing but the Truth," I say still. "As much Truth as possible," I say still. But truth so presented, that it will need the help of the imagination to make it real. Between the painter and the beholder, each doing his proper part, the reality should be sustained; and after the beholding imagination has come forward and done its best, then, with its help, and in the full action of it, the beholder should be able to say, I feel as if I were at the real place, or seeing the real incident. But not without that help.

§ 18. Farther, in consequence of that other character of the imagination, fatiguableness, it is a great advantage to the picture that it need not present too much at once, and that what it does present may be so chosen and ordered as not only to be more easily seized, but to give the imagination rest, and, as it were, places to lie down and stretch its limbs in; kindly vacancies, beguiling it back into action, with pleasant and cautious sequence of incident; all jarring thoughts being excluded, all vain redundance denied, and all just and sweet transition permitted.

And thus it is that, for the most part, imperfect sketches, engravings, outlines, rude sculptures, and other forms of abstraction, possess a charm which the most finished picture frequently wants. For not only does the finished picture excite the imagination less, but, like nature itself, it *taxes* it more. None of it can be enjoyed till the imagination is brought to bear upon it; and the details of the completed picture are so numerous, that it needs greater strength and willingness in the beholder to follow them all out; the redundance, perhaps, being not too great for the mind of a careful observer, but too great for a casual or careless observer. So that although the perfection of art will always consist in the utmost *acceptable* completion, yet, as every added idea will increase the difficulty of apprehension, and every added touch advance the dangerous realism which

makes the imagination languid, the difference between a noble and ignoble painter is in nothing more sharply defined than in this,—that the first wishes to put into his work as much truth as possible, and yet to keep it looking *un*-real; the second wishes to get through his work lazily, with as little truth as possible, and yet to make it look real; and, so far as they add color to their abstract sketch, the first realizes for the sake of the color, and the second colors for the sake of the realization.*

§ 19. And then, lastly, it is another infinite advantage possessed by the picture, that in these various differences from reality it becomes the expression of the power and intelligence of a companionable human soul. In all this choice, arrangement, penetrative sight, and kindly guidance, we recognize a supernatural operation, and perceive, not merely the landscape or incident as in a mirror, but, besides, the presence of what, after all, may perhaps be the most wonderful piece of divine work in the whole matter—the great human spirit through which it is manifested to us. So that, although with respect to many important scenes, it might, as we saw above, be one of the most precious gifts that could be given us to see them with *our own eyes*, yet also in many things it is more desirable to be permitted to see them with the eyes of others; and although, to the small, conceited, and affected painter displaying his narrow knowledge and tiny dexterities, our only word may be, "Stand aside from between that nature and me," yet to the great imaginative painter —greater a million times in every faculty of soul than we—our word may wisely be, "Come between this nature and me—this nature which is too great and too wonderful for me; temper it for me, interpret it to me; let me see with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and have help and strength from your great spirit."

All the noblest pictures have this character. They are true or inspired ideals, seen in a moment to *be* ideal; that is to say, the result of all the highest powers of the imagination, engaged in the discovery and apprehension of the purest truths, and having so arranged them as best to show their preciousness and exalt their clearness. They are always orderly, always one, ruled by one

* Several other points connected with this subject have already been noticed in the last chapter of the Stones of Venice, § 21. &c.

great purpose throughout, in the fulfilment of which every atom of the detail is called to help, and would be missed if removed; this peculiar oneness being the result, not of obedience to any teachable law, but of the magnificence of tone in the perfect mind, which accepts only what is good for its great purposes, rejects whatever is foreign or redundant, and instinctively and instantaneously ranges whatever it accepts, in sublime subordination and helpful brotherhood.

§ 20. Then, this being the greatest art, the lowest art is the mimicry of it,—the subordination of nothing to nothing; the elaborate arrangement of sightlessness and emptiness; the order which has no object; the unity which has no life, and the law which has no love; the light which has nothing to illumine, and shadow which has nothing to relieve.*

§ 21. And then, between these two, comes the wholesome, happy, and noble—though not noblest—art of simple transcript from nature; into which, so far as our modern Pre-Raphaelitism falls, it will indeed do sacred service in ridding us of the old fallacies and componencies, but cannot itself rise above the level of simple and happy usefulness. So far as it is to be great, it must add,—and so far as it *is* great, has already added, —the great imaginative element to all its faithfulness in transcript. And for this reason, I said in the close of my Edinburgh Lectures, that Pre-Raphaelitism, as long as it confined itself to the simple copying of nature, could not take the character of the highest class of art. But it has already, almost unconsciously, supplied the defect, and taken that character, in all its best results; and, so far as it ought, hereafter, it will assuredly do so, as soon as it is permitted to maintain itself in any other position than that of stern antagonism to the composition teachers around it. I say "so far as it ought," because, as

* "Though my pictures should have nothing else, they shall have Chiaroscuro."—CONSTABLE (in Leslie's Life of him). It is singular to reflect what that fatal Chiaroscuro has done in art, in the full extent of its influence. It has been not only shadow, but shadow of Death: passing over the face of the ancient art, as death itself might over a fair human countenance; whispering, as it reduced it to the white projections and lightless orbits of the skull, "Thy face shall have nothing else, but it shall have Chiaroscuro."

already noticed in that same place, we have enough, and to spare, of noble *inventful* pictures; so many have we, that we let them moulder away on the walls and roofs of Italy without one regretful thought about them. But of simple transcripts from nature, till now we have had none; even Van Eyck and Albert Durer having been strongly filled with the spirit of grotesque idealism; so that the Pre-Raphaelites have, to the letter, fulfilled Steele's description of the author, who "determined to write in an entirely new manner, and describe things exactly as they took place."

§ 22. We have now, I believe, in some sort answered most of the questions which were suggested to us during our statement of the nature of great art. I could recapitulate the answers; but perhaps the reader is already sufficiently wearied of the recurrence of the terms "Ideal," "Nature," "Imagination," "Invention," and will hardly care to see them again interchanged among each other, in the formalities of a summary. What difficulties may yet occur to him will, I think, disappear as he either re-reads the passages which suggested them, or follows out the consideration of the subject for himself:—this very simple, but very precious, conclusion being continually remembered by him as the sum of all; that greatness in art (as assuredly in all other things, but more distinctly in this than in most of them,) is not a teachable nor gainable thing, but *the expression of the mind of a God-made great man;* that teach, or preach, or labor as you will, everlasting difference is set between one man's capacity and another's; and that this God-given supremacy is the priceless thing, always just as rare in the world at one time as another. What you can manufacture, or communicate, you can lower the price of, but this mental supremacy is incommunicable; you will never multiply its quantity, nor lower its price; and nearly the best thing that men can generally do is to set themselves, not to the attainment, but the discovery of this; learning to know gold, when we see it, from iron-glance, and diamonds from flint sand, being for most of us a more profitable employment than trying to make diamonds out of our own charcoal. And for this God-made supremacy, I generally have used, and shall continue to

use, the word Inspiration, not carelessly nor lightly, but in all logical calmness and perfect reverence. We English have many false ideas about reverence: we should be shocked, for instance, to see a market-woman come into church with a basket of eggs on her arm: we think it more reverent to lock her out till Sunday; and to surround the church with respectability of iron railings, and defend it with pacing inhabitation of beadles. I believe this to be irreverence; and that it is more truly reverent, when the market-woman, hot and hurried, at six in the morning, her head much confused with calculations of the probable price of eggs, can nevertheless get within church porch, and church aisle, and church chancel, lay the basket down on the very steps of the altar, and receive thereat so much of help and hope as may serve her for the day's work. In like manner we are solemnly, but I think not wisely, shocked at any one who comes hurriedly into church, in any figurative way, with his basket on his arm; and perhaps, so long as we feel it so, it is better to keep the basket out. But, as for this one commodity of high mental supremacy, it cannot be kept out, for the very fountain of it is in the church wall, and there is no other right word for it but this of Inspiration; a word, indeed, often ridiculously perverted, and irreverently used of fledgling poets and pompous orators—no one being offended then, and yet cavilled at when quietly used of the spirit that it is in a truly great man; cavilled at, chiefly, it seems to me, because we expect to know inspiration by the look of it. Let a man have shaggy hair, dark eyes, a rolling voice, plenty of animal energy, and a facility of rhyming or sentencing, and—improvisatore or sentimentalist—we call him "inspired" willingly enough; but let him be a rough, quiet worker, not proclaiming himself melodiously in any wise, but familiar with us, unpretending, and letting all his littlenesses and feeblenesses be seen, unhindered,—wearing an ill-cut coat withal, and, though he be such a man as is only sent upon the earth once in five hundred years, for some special human teaching, it is irreverent to call him "inspired." But, be it irreverent or not, this word I must always use; and the rest of what work I have here before me, is simply to prove the truth of it, with respect to the one among

these mighty spirits whom we have just lost; who divided his hearers, as many an inspired speaker has done before now, into two great sects—a large and a narrow; these searching the Nature-scripture calmly, "whether those things were so," and those standing haughtily on their Mars hill, asking, "what will this babbler say?"

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE NOVELTY OF LANDSCAPE.

§ 1. HAVING now obtained, I trust, clear ideas, up to a certain point, of what is generally right and wrong in all art, both in conception and in workmanship, we have to apply these laws of right to the particular branch of art which is the subject of our present inquiry, namely, landscape-painting. Respecting which, after the various meditations into which we have been led on the high duties and ideals of art, it may not improbably occur to us first to ask,—whether it be worth inquiring about at all.

That question, perhaps the reader thinks, should have been asked and answered before I had written, or he read, two volumes and a half about it. So I *had* answered it, in my own mind; but it seems time now to give the grounds for this answer. If, indeed, the reader has never suspected that landscape-painting was anything but good, right, and healthy work, I should be sorry to put any doubt of its being so into his mind; but if, as seems to me more likely, he, living in this busy and perhaps somewhat calamitous age, has some suspicion that landscape-painting is but an idle and empty business, not worth all our long talk about it, then, perhaps, he will be pleased to have such suspicion done away, before troubling himself farther with these disquisitions.

§ 2. I should rather be glad, than otherwise, that he *had* formed some suspicion on this matter. If he has at all admitted the truth of anything hitherto said respecting great art, and its choices of subject, it seems to me he ought, by this time, to be questioning with himself whether road-side weeds, old cottages, broken stones, and such other materials, be worthy matters for grave men to busy themselves in the imitation of. And I should like him to probe this doubt to the deep of it, and

bring all his misgivings out to the broad light, that we may see how we are to deal with them, or ascertain if indeed they are too well founded to be dealt with.

§ 3. And to this end I would ask him now to imagine himself entering, for the first time in his life, the room of the Old Water-Color Society; and to suppose that he has entered it, not for the sake of a quiet examination of the paintings one by one, but in order to seize such ideas as it may generally suggest respecting the state and meaning of modern as compared with elder, art. I suppose him, of course, that he may be capable of such a comparison, to be in some degree familiar with the different forms in which art has developed itself within the periods historically known to us; but never, till that moment, to have seen any completely modern work. So prepared, and so unprepared, he would, as his ideas began to arrange themselves, be first struck by the number of paintings representing blue mountains, clear lakes, and ruined castles or cathedrals, and he would say to himself: "There is something strange in the mind of these modern people! Nobody ever cared about blue mountains before, or tried to paint the broken stones of old walls." And the more he considered the subject, the more he would feel the peculiarity; and, as he thought over the art of Greeks and Romans, he would still repeat, with increasing certainty of conviction: "Mountains! I remember none. The Greeks did not seem, as artists, to know that such things were in the world. They carved, or variously represented, men, and horses, and beasts, and birds, and all kinds of living creatures,—yes, even down to cuttle-fish; and trees, in a sort of way; but not so much as the outline of a mountain; and as for lakes, they merely showed they knew the difference between salt and fresh water by the fish they put into each." Then he would pass on to mediæval art: and still he would be obliged to repeat: "Mountains! I remember none. Some careless and jagged arrangements of blue spires or spikes on the horizon, and, here and there, an attempt at representing an overhanging rock with a hole through it; but merely in order to divide the light behind some human figure. Lakes! No, nothing of the kind,—only blue bays of sea put in to fill up the background when the painter could not think of anything else. Broken-

down buildings! No; for the most part very complete and well-appointed buildings, if any; and never buildings at all, but to give place or explanation to some circumstance of human conduct." And then he would look up again to the modern pictures, observing, with an increasing astonishment, that here the human interest had, in many cases, altogether disappeared. That mountains, instead of being used only as a blue ground for the relief of the heads of saints, were themselves the exclusive subjects of reverent contemplation; that their ravines, and peaks, and forests, were all painted with an appearance of as much enthusiasm as had formerly been devoted to the dimple of beauty, or the frowns of asceticism; and that all the living interest which was still supposed necessary to the scene, might be supplied by a traveller in a slouched hat, a beggar in a scarlet cloak, or, in default of these, even by a heron or a wild duck.

And if he could entirely divest himself of his own modern habits of thought, and regard the subjects in question with the feelings of a knight or monk of the middle ages, it might be a question whether those feelings would not rapidly verge towards contempt. "What!" he might perhaps mutter to himself, "here are human beings spending the whole of their lives in making pictures of bits of stone and runlets of water, withered sticks and flying frogs, and actually not a picture of the gods or the heroes! none of the saints or the martyrs! none of the angels and demons! none of councils or battles, or any other single thing worth the thought of a man! Trees and clouds indeed! as if I should not see as many trees as I cared to see, and more, in the first half of my day's journey to-morrow, or as if it mattered to any man whether the sky were clear or cloudy, so long as his armor did not get too hot in the sun!"

§ 5. There can be no question that this would have been somewhat the tone of thought with which either a Lacedæmonian, a soldier of Rome in her strength, or a knight of the thirteenth century, would have been apt to regard these particular forms of our present art. Nor can there be any question that, in many respects, their judgment would have been just. It is true that the indignation of the Spartan or Roman would have been equally excited against any appearance of luxurious

industry; but the mediæval knight would, to the full, have admitted the nobleness of art; only he would have had it employed in decorating his church or his prayer-book, nor in imitating moors and clouds. And the feelings of all the three would have agreed in this,—that their main ground of offence must have been the want of *seriousness* and *purpose* in what they saw. They would all have admitted the nobleness of whatever conduced to the honor of the gods, or the power of the nation; but they would not have understood how the skill of human life could be wisely spent in that which did no honor either to Jupiter or to the Virgin; and which in no wise tended, apparently, either to the accumulation of wealth, the excitement of patriotism, or the advancement of morality.

§ 6. And exactly so far forth their judgment would be just, as the landscape-painting could indeed be shown, for others as well as for them, to be art of this nugatory kind; and so far forth unjust, as that painting could be shown to depend upon, or cultivate, certain sensibilities which neither the Greek nor mediæval knight possessed, and which have resulted from some extraordinary change in human nature since their time. We have no right to assume, without very accurate examination of it, that this change has been an ennobling one. The simple fact, that we are, in some strange way, different from all the great races that have existed before us, cannot at once be received as the proof of our own greatness; nor can it be granted, without any question, that we have a legitimate subject of complacency in being under the influence of feelings, with which neither Miltiades nor the Black Prince, neither Homer nor Dante, neither Socrates nor St. Francis, could for an instant have sympathized.

§ 7. Whether, however, this fact be one to excite our pride or not, it is assuredly one to excite our deepest interest. The fact itself is certain. For nearly six thousand years the energies of man have pursued certain beaten paths, manifesting some constancy of feeling throughout all that period, and involving some fellowship at heart, among the various nations who by turns succeeded or surpassed each other in the several aims of art or policy. So that, for these thousands of years, the whole human race might be to some extent described in general terms.

Man was a creature separated from all others by his instinctive sense of an Existence superior to his own, invariably manifesting this sense of the being of a God more strongly in proportion to his own perfectness of mind and body; and making enormous and self-denying efforts, in order to obtain some persuasion of the immediate presence or approval of the Divinity. So that, on the whole, the best things he did were done as in the presence, or for the honor, of his gods; and, whether in statues, to help him to imagine them, or temples raised to their honor, or acts of self-sacrifice done in the hope of their love, he brought whatever was best and skilfullest in him into their service, and lived in a perpetual subjection to their unseen power. Also, he was always anxious to know something definite about them; and his chief books, songs, and pictures were filled with legends about them, or especially devoted to illustration of their lives and nature.

§ 8. Next to these gods he was always anxious to know something about his human ancestors; fond of exalting the memory, and telling or painting the history of old rulers and benefactors; yet full of an enthusiastic confidence in himself, as having in many ways advanced beyond the best efforts of past time; and eager to record his own doings for future fame. He was a creature eminently warlike, placing his principal pride in dominion; eminently beautiful, and having great delight in his own beauty: setting forth this beauty by every species of invention in dress, and rendering his arms and accoutrements superbly decorative of his form. He took, however, very little interest in anything but what belonged to humanity; caring in no wise for the external world, except as it influenced his own destiny; honoring the lightning because it could strike him, the sea because it could drown him, the fountains because they gave him drink, and the grass because it yielded him seed; but utterly incapable of feeling any special happiness in the love of such things, or any earnest emotion about them, considered as separate from man; therefore giving no time to the study of them;—knowing little of herbs, except only which were hurtful, and which healing; of stones, only which would glitter brightest in a crown, or last the longest in a wall; of the wild beasts, which were best for food, and which the stoutest quarry

for the hunter ;—thus spending only on the lower creatures and inanimate things his waste energy, his dullest thoughts, his most languid emotions, and reserving all his acuter intellect for researches into his own nature and that of the gods ; all his strength of will for the acquirement of political or moral power ; all his sense of beauty for things immediately connected with his own person and life ; and all his deep affections for domestic or divine companionship.

Such, in broad light and brief terms, was man for five thousand years. Such he is no longer. Let us consider what he is now, comparing the descriptions clause by clause.

§ 9. I. He *was* invariably sensible of the existence of gods, and went about all his speculations or works holding this as an acknowledged fact, making his best efforts in their service. *Now* he is capable of going through life with hardly any positive idea on this subject,—doubting, fearing, suspecting, analyzing,—doing everything, in fact, *but* believing ; hardly ever getting quite up to that point which hitherto was wont to be the starting point for all generations. And human work has accordingly hardly any reference to spiritual beings, but is done either from a patriotic or personal interest,—either to benefit mankind, or reach some selfish end, not (I speak of human work in the broad sense) to please the gods.

II. He *was* a beautiful creature, setting forth this beauty by all means in his power, and depending upon it for much of his authority over his fellows. So that the ruddy cheek of David, and the ivory skin of Atrides, and the towering presence of Saul, and the blue eyes of Cœur de Lion, were among the chief reasons why they should be kings ; and it was one of the aims of all education, and of all dress, to make the presence of the human form stately and lovely. *Now* it has become the task of grave philosophy partly to depreciate or conceal this bodily beauty ; and even by those who esteem it in their hearts, it is not made one of the great ends of education : man has become, upon the whole, an ugly animal, and is not ashamed of his ugliness.

III. He *was* eminently warlike. He is *now* gradually becoming more and more ashamed of all the arts and aims of battle. So that the desire of dominion, which was once frankly

confessed or boasted of as a heroic passion, is now sternly reprobated or cunningly disclaimed.

IV. He *used* to take no interest in anything but what immediately concerned himself. *Now*, he has deep interest in the abstract natures of things, inquires as eagerly into the laws which regulate the economy of the material world, as into those of his own being, and manifests a passionate admiration of inanimate objects, closely resembling, in its elevation and tenderness, the affection which he bears to those living souls with which he is brought into the nearest fellowship.

§ 10. It is this last change only which is to be the subject of our present inquiry; but it cannot be doubted that it is closely connected with all the others, and that we can only thoroughly understand its nature by considering it in this connection. For, regarded by itself, we might, perhaps, too rashly assume it to be a natural consequence of the progress of the race. There appears to be a diminution of selfishness in it, and a more extended and heartfelt desire of understanding the manner of God's working; and this the more, because one of the permanent characters of this change is a greater accuracy in the statement of external facts. When the eyes of men were fixed first upon themselves, and upon nature solely and secondarily as bearing upon their interests, it was of less consequence to them what the ultimate laws of nature were, than what their immediate effects were upon human beings. Hence they could rest satisfied with phenomena instead of principles, and accepted without scrutiny every fable which seemed sufficiently or gracefully to account for those phenomena. But so far as the eyes of men are now withdrawn from themselves, and turned upon the inanimate things about them, the results cease to be of importance, and the laws become essential.

§ 11. In these respects, it might easily appear to us that this change was assuredly one of steady and natural advance. But when we contemplate the others above noted, of which it is clearly one of the branches or consequences, we may suspect ourselves of over-rashness in our self-congratulation, and admit the necessity of a scrupulous analysis both of the feeling itself and of its tendencies.

Of course a complete analysis, or anything like it, would

involve a treatise on the whole history of the world. I shall merely endeavor to note some of the leading and more interesting circumstances bearing on the subject, and to show sufficient practical ground for the conclusion, that landscape painting is indeed a noble and useful art, though one not long known by man. I shall therefore examine, as best I can, the effect of landscape, 1st, on the Classical mind; 2ndly, on the Mediæval mind; and lastly, on the Modern mind. But there is one point of some interest respecting the effect of it on *any* mind, which must be settled first, and this I will endeavor to do in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

OF THE PATHETIC FALLACY.

§ 1. GERMAN dulness and English affectation, have of late much multiplied among us the use of two of the most objectionable words that were ever coined by the troublesomeness of metaphysicians,—namely, "Objective" and "Subjective."

No words can be more exquisitely, and in all points, useless; and I merely speak of them that I may, at once and for ever, get them out of my way and out of my reader's. But to get that done, they must be explained.

The word "Blue," say certain philosophers, means the sensation of color which the human eye receives in looking at the open sky, or at a bell gentian.

Now, say they farther, as this sensation can only be felt when the eye is turned to the object, and as, therefore, no such sensation is produced by the object when nobody looks at it, therefore the thing, when it is not looked at, is not blue; and thus (say they) there are many qualities of things which depend as much on something else as on themselves. To be sweet, a thing must have a taster; it is only sweet while it is being tasted, and if the tongue had not the capacity of taste, then the sugar would not have the quality of sweetness.

And then they agree that the qualities of things which thus depend upon our perception of them, and upon our human nature as affected by them, shall be called Subjective; and the qualities of things which they always have, irrespective of any other nature, as roundness or squareness, shall be called Objective.

From these ingenious views the step is very easy to a farther opinion, that it does not much matter what things are in themselves, but only what they are to us; and that the only real truth of them is their appearance to, or effect upon, us. From which position, with a hearty desire for mystification, and

much egotism, selfishness, shallowness, and impertinence, a philosopher may easily go so far as to believe, and say, that everything in the world depends upon his seeing or thinking of it, and that nothing, therefore, exists, but what he sees or thinks of.

§ 2. Now, to get rid of all these ambiguities and troublesome words at once, be it observed that the word "Blue" does *not* mean the *sensation* caused by a gentian on the human eye; but it means the *power* of producing that sensation; and this power is always there, in the thing, whether we are there to experience it or not, and would remain there though there were not left a man on the face of the earth. Precisely in the same way gunpowder has a power of exploding. It will not explode if you put no match to it. But it has always the power of so exploding, and is therefore called an explosive compound, which it very positively and assuredly is, whatever philosophy may say to the contrary.

In like manner, a gentian does not produce the sensation of blueness if you don't look at it. But it has always the power of doing so; its particles being everlastingly so arranged by its Maker. And, therefore, the gentian and the sky are always verily blue, whatever philosophy may say to the contrary; and if you do not see them blue when you look at them, it is not their fault but yours.*

§ 3. Hence I would say to these philosophers: If, instead of using the sonorous phrase, "It is objectively so," you will use the plain old phrase, "It *is* so;" and if instead of the sonorous phrase, "It is subjectively so," you will say, in plain old English, "It does so," or "It seems so to me;" you will, on the whole, be more intelligible to your fellow-creatures: and be-

* It is quite true, that in all qualities involving sensation, there may be a doubt whether different people receive the same sensation from the same thing (compare Part II. Sec. I. Chap. V. § 6.); but, though this makes such facts not distinctly explicable, it does not alter the facts themselves. I derive a certain sensation, which I call sweetness, from sugar. That is a fact. Another person feels a sensation, which *he* also calls sweetness, from sugar. That is also a fact. The sugar's power to produce these two sensations, which we suppose to be, and which are, in all probability, very nearly the same in both of us, and, on the whole, in the human race, is its sweetness.

sides, if you find that a thing which generally "does so" to other people (as a gentian looks blue to most men) does *not* so to you, on any particular occasion, you will not fall into the impertinence of saying that the thing is not so, or did not so, but you will say simply (what you will be all the better for speedily finding out) that something is the matter with you. If you find that you cannot explode the gunpowder, you will not declare that all gunpowder is subjective, and all explosion imaginary, but you will simply suspect and declare yourself to be an ill-made match. Which, on the whole, though there may be a distant chance of a mistake about it, is, nevertheless, the wisest conclusion you can come to until farther experiment.*

§ 4. Now, therefore, putting these tiresome and absurd words quite out of our way, we may go on at our ease to examine the point in question,—namely, the difference between the ordinary, proper, and true appearances of things to us; and the extraordinary, or false appearances, when we are under the influence of emotion, or contemplative fancy;† false appearances, I say, as being entirely unconnected with any real power or character in the object, and only imputed to it by us.

* In fact (for I may as well, for once, meet our German friends in their own style), all that has been subjected to us on this subject seems object to this great objection; that the subjection of all things (subject to no exceptions) to senses which are, in us, both subject and abject, and objects of perpetual contempt, cannot but make it our ultimate object to subject ourselves to the senses, and to remove whatever objections existed to such subjection. So that, finally, that which is the subject of examination or object of attention, uniting thus in itself the characters of subness and obness (so that, that which has no obness in it should be called sub-subjective, or a sub-subject, and that which has no subness in it should be called upper or ober-objective, or an ob-object); and we also, who suppose ourselves the objects of every arrangement, and are certainly the subjects of every sensual impression, thus uniting in ourselves, in an obverse or adverse manner, the characters of obness and subness, must both become metaphysically dejected or rejected, nothing remaining in *us* objective, but subjectivity, and the very objectivity of the object being lost in the abyss of this subjectivity of the Human.

There is, however, some meaning in the above sentence, if the reader cares to make it out; but in a pure German sentence of the highest style there is often none whatever. See Appendix II. "German Philosophy."

† Contemplative, in the sense explained in Part III. Sec. II. Chap. IV.

For instance—

> "The spendthrift crocus, bursting through the mould
> Naked and shivering, with his cup of gold." *

This is very beautiful and yet very untrue. The crocus is not a spendthrift, but a hardy plant; its yellow is not gold, but saffron. How is it that we enjoy so much the having it put into our heads that it is anything else than a plain crocus?

It is an important question. For, throughout our past reasonings about art, we have always found that nothing could be good or useful, or ultimately pleasurable, which was untrue. But here is something pleasurable in written poetry which is nevertheless *un*true. And what is more, if we think over our favorite poetry, we shall find it full of this kind of fallacy, and that we like it all the more for being so.

§ 5. It will appear also, on consideration of the matter, that this fallacy is of two principal kinds. Either, as in this case of the crocus, it is the fallacy of wilful fancy, which involves no real expectation that it will be believed; or else it is a fallacy caused by an excited state of the feelings, making us, for the time, more or less irrational. Of the cheating of the fancy we shall have to speak presently; but, in this chapter, I want to examine the nature of the other error, that which the mind admits, when affected strongly by emotion. Thus, for instance, in Alton Locke,—

> "They rowed her in across the rolling foam—
> The cruel, crawling foam."

The foam is not cruel, neither does it crawl. The state of mind which attributes to it these characters of a living creature is one in which the reason is unhinged by grief. All violent feelings have the same effect. They produce in us a falseness in all our impressions of external things, which I would generally characterize as the "Pathetic fallacy."

§ 6. Now we are in the habit of considering this fallacy as eminently a character of poetical description, and the temper of mind in which we allow it, as one eminently poetical, because

* Holmes (Oliver Wendell), quoted by Miss Mitford in her Recollections of a Literary Life.

passionate. But, I believe, if we look well into the matter, that we shall find the greatest poets do not often admit this kind of falseness,—that it is only the second order of poets who much delight in it.*

Thus, when Dante describes the spirits falling from the bank of Acheron "as dead leaves flutter from a bough," he gives the most perfect image possible of their utter lightness, feebleness, passiveness, and scattering agony of despair, without, however, for an instant losing his own clear perception that *these* are souls, and *those* are leaves: he makes no confusion of one with the other. But when Coleridge speaks of

> "The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
> That dances as often as dance it can,"

he has a morbid, that is to say, a so far false, idea about the leaf: he fancies a life in it, and will, which there are not; con-

* I admit two orders of poets, but no third; and by these two orders I mean the Creative (Shakspere, Homer, Dante), and Reflective or Perceptive (Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson). But both of these must be *first*-rate in their range, though their range is different; and with poetry second-rate in *quality* no one ought to be allowed to trouble mankind. There is quite enough of the best,—much more than we can ever read or enjoy in the length of a life; and it is a literal wrong or sin in any person to encumber us with inferior work. I have no patience with apologies made by young pseudo-poets, "that they believe there is *some* good in what they have written: that they hope to do better in time," etc. *Some* good! If there is not *all* good, there is no good. If they ever hope to do better, why do they trouble us now? Let them rather courageously burn all they have done, and wait for the better days. There are few men, ordinarily educated, who in moments of strong feeling could not strike out a poetical thought, and afterwards polish it so as to be presentable. But men of sense know better than so to waste their time; and those who sincerely love poetry, know the touch of the master's hand on the chords too well to fumble among them after him. Nay, more than this; all inferior poetry is an injury to the good, inasmuch as it takes away the freshness of rhymes, blunders upon and gives a wretched commonalty to good thoughts; and, in general, adds to the weight of human weariness in a most woful and culpable manner. There are few thoughts likely to come across ordinary men, which have not already been expressed by greater men in the best possible way; and it is a wiser, more generous, more noble thing to remember and point out the perfect words, than to invent poorer ones, wherewith to encumber temporarily the world.

fuses its powerlessness with choice, its fading death with merriment, and the wind that shakes it with music. Here, however, there is some beauty, even in the morbid passage; but take an instance in Homer and Pope. Without the knowledge of Ulysses, Elpenor, his youngest follower, has fallen from an upper chamber in the Circean palace, and has been left dead, unmissed by his leader, or companions, in the haste of their departure. They cross the sea to the Cimmerian land; and Ulysses summons the shades from Tartarus. The first which appears is that of the lost Elpenor. Ulysses, amazed, and in exactly the spirit of bitter and terrified lightness which is seen in Hamlet,* addresses the spirit with the simple, startled words:—

"Elpenor? How camest thou under the Shadowy darkness? Hast thou come faster on foot than I in my black ship?"

Which Pope renders thus:—

"O, say, what angry power Elpenor led
To glide in shades, and wander with the dead?
How could thy soul, by realms and seas disjoined,
Outfly the nimble sail, and leave the lagging wind?"

I sincerely hope the reader finds no pleasure here, either in the nimbleness of the sail, or the laziness of the wind! And yet how is it that these conceits are so painful now, when they have been pleasant to us in the other instances?

§ 7. For a very simple reason. They are not a *pathetic* fallacy at all, for they are put into the mouth of the wrong passion —a passion which never could possibly have spoken them— agonized curiosity. Ulysses wants to know the facts of the matter; and the very last thing his mind could do at the moment would be to pause, or suggest in any wise what was *not* a fact. The delay in the first three lines, and conceit in the last, jar upon us instantly, like the most frightful discord in music. No poet of true imaginative power could possibly have written the passage. It is worth while comparing the way a similar question is put by the exquisite sincerity of Keats:—

"He wept, and his bright tears
Went trickling down the golden bow he held.

* "Well said, Old mole! can'st work i' the ground so fast?"

Thus, with half-shut, suffused eyes, he stood;
While from beneath some cumb'rous boughs hard by,
With solemn step, an awful goddess came.
And there was purport in her looks for him,
Which he with eager guess began to read:
Perplexed the while, melodiously he said,
'*How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea?*'"

Therefore, we see that the spirit of truth must guide us in some sort, even in our enjoyment of fallacy. Coleridge's fallacy has no discord in it, but Pope's has set our teeth on edge. Without farther questioning, I will endeavor to state the main bearings of this matter.

§ 8. The temperament which admits the pathetic fallacy, is, as I said above, that of a mind and body in some sort too weak to deal fully with what is before them or upon them; borne away, or over-clouded, or over-dazzled by emotion; and it is a more or less noble state, according to the force of the emotion which has induced it. For it is no credit to a man that he is not morbid or inaccurate in his perceptions, when he has no strength of feeling to warp them; and it is in general a sign of higher capacity and stand in the ranks of being, that the emotions should be strong enough to vanquish, partly, the intellect, and make it believe what they choose. But it is still a grander condition when the intellect also rises, till it is strong enough to assert its rule against, or together with, the utmost efforts of the passions; and the whole man stands in an iron glow, white hot, perhaps, but still strong, and in no wise evaporating; even if he melts, losing none of his weight.

So, then, we have the three ranks: the man who perceives rightly, because he does not feel, and to whom the primrose is very accurately the primrose, because he does not love it. Then, secondly, the man who perceives wrongly, because he feels, and to whom the primrose is anything else than a primrose: a star, or a sun, or a fairy's shield, or a forsaken maiden. And then, lastly, there is the man who perceives rightly in spite of his feelings, and to whom the primrose is for ever nothing else than itself—a little flower, apprehended in the very plain and leafy fact of it, whatever and how many soever the associations and passions may be, that crowd around it. And, in

general, these three classes may be rated in comparative order, as the men who are not poets at all, and the poets of the second order, and the poets of the first; only however great a man may be, there are always some subjects which *ought* to throw him off his balance; some, by which his poor human capacity of thought should be conquered, and brought into the inaccurate and vague state of perception, so that the language of the highest inspiration becomes broken, obscure, and wild in metaphor, resembling that of the weaker man, overborne by weaker things.

§ 9. And thus, in full, there are four classes: the men who feel nothing, and therefore see truly; the men who feel strongly, think weakly, and see untruly (second order of poets); the men who feel strongly, think strongly, and see truly (first order of poets); and the men who, strong as human creatures can be, are yet submitted to influences stronger than they, and see in a sort untruly, because what they see is inconceivably above them. This last is the usual condition of prophetic inspiration.

§ 10. I separate these classes, in order that their character may be clearly understood; but of course they are united each to the other by imperceptible transitions, and the same mind, according to the influences to which it is subjected, passes at different times into the various states. Still, the difference between the great and less man is, on the whole, chiefly in this point of *alterability*. That is to say, the one knows too much, and perceives and feels too much of the past and future, and of all things beside and around that which immediately affects him, to be in any wise shaken by it. His mind is made up; his thoughts have an accustomed current; his ways are steadfast; it is not this or that new sight which will at once unbalance him. He is tender to impression at the surface, like a rock with deep moss upon it; but there is too much mass of him to be moved. The smaller man, with the same degree of sensibility, is at once carried off his feet; he wants to do something he did not want to do before; he views all the universe in a new light through his tears; he is gay or enthusiastic, melancholy or passionate, as things come and go to him. Therefore the high creative poet might even be thought, to a great extent, impassive (as shallow people think Dante stern), receiving

indeed all feelings to the full, but having a great centre of reflection and knowledge in which he stands serene, and watches the feeling, as it were, from far off.

Dante, in his most intense moods, has entire command of himself, and can look around calmly, at all moments, for the image or the word that will best tell what he sees to the upper or lower world. But Keats and Tennyson, and the poets of the second order, are generally themselves subdued by the feelings under which they write, or, at least, write as choosing to be so, and therefore admit certain expressions and modes of thought which are in some sort diseased or false.

§ 11. Now so long as we see that the *feeling* is true, we pardon, or are even pleased by, the confessed fallacy of sight which it induces: we are pleased, for instance, with those lines of Kingsley's, above quoted, not because they fallaciously describe foam, but because they faithfully describe sorrow. But the moment the mind of the speaker becomes cold, that moment every such expression becomes untrue, as being for ever untrue in the external facts. And there is no greater baseness in literature than the habit of using these metaphorical expressions in cool blood. An inspired writer, in full impetuosity of passion, may speak wisely and truly of "raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame;" but it is only the basest writer who cannot speak of the sea without talking of "raging waves," "remorseless floods," "ravenous billows," &c.; and it is one of the signs of the highest power in a writer to check all such habits of thought, and to keep his eyes fixed firmly on the *pure fact*, out of which if any feeling comes to him or his reader, he knows it must be a true one.

To keep to the waves, I forget who it is who represents a man in despair, desiring that his body may be cast into the sea,

> "*Whose changing mound, and foam that passed away,*
> Might mock the eye that questioned where I lay."

Observe, there is not a single false, or even overcharged, expression. "Mound" of the sea wave is perfectly simple and true; "changing" is as familiar as may be; "foam that passed away," strictly literal; and the whole line descriptive of the reality with a degree of accuracy which I know not any other

verse, in the range of poetry, that altogether equals. For most people have not a distinct idea of the clumsiness and massiveness of a large wave. The word "wave" is used too generally of ripples and breakers, and bendings in light drapery or grass: it does not by itself convey a perfect image. But the word "mound" is heavy, large, dark, definite; there is no mistaking the kind of wave meant, nor missing the sight of it. Then the term "changing" has a peculiar force also. Most people think of waves as rising and falling. But if they look at the sea carefully, they will perceive that the waves do not rise and fall. They change. Change both place and form, but they do not fall; one wave goes on, and on, and still on; now lower, now higher, now tossing its mane like a horse, now building itself together like a wall, now shaking, now steady, but still the same wave, till at last it seems struck by something, and changes, one knows not how,—becomes another wave.

The close of the line insists on this image, and paints it still more perfectly,—"foam that passed away." Not merely melting, disappearing, but passing on, out of sight, on the career of the wave. Then, having put the absolute ocean fact as far as he may before our eyes, the poet leaves us to feel about it as we may, and to trace for ourselves the opposite fact,—the image of the green mounds that do not change, and the white and written stones that do not pass away; and thence to follow out also the associated images of the calm life with the quiet grave, and the despairing life with the fading foam:—

"Let no man move his bones."
"As for Samaria, her king is cut off like the foam upon the water."

But nothing of this is actually told or pointed out, and the expressions, as they stand, are perfectly severe and accurate, utterly uninfluenced by the firmly governed emotion of the writer. Even the word "mock" is hardly an exception, as it may stand merely for "deceive" or "defeat," without implying any impersonation of the waves.

§ 12. It may be well, perhaps, to give one or two more instances to show the peculiar dignity possessed by all passages which thus limit their expression to the pure fact, and leave the hearer to gather what he can from it. Here is a notable one

from the Iliad. Helen, looking from the Scæan gate of Troy over the Grecian host, and telling Priam the names of its captains, says at last :—

"I see all the other dark-eyed Greeks ; but two I cannot see,—Castor and Pollux,—whom one mother bore with me. Have they not followed from fair Lacedæmon, or have they indeed come in their sea-wandering ships, but now will not enter into the battle of men, fearing the shame and the scorn that is in me ?"

Then Homer :—

"So she spoke. But them, already, the life-giving earth possessed, there in Lacedæmon, in the dear fatherland."

Note, here, the high poetical truth carried to the extreme. The poet has to speak of the earth in sadness, but he will not let that sadness affect or change his thoughts of it. No ; though Castor and Pollux be dead, yet the earth is our mother still, fruitful, life-giving. These are the facts of the thing. I see nothing else than these. Make what you will of them.

§ 13. Take another very notable instance from Casimir de la Vigne's terrible ballad, "La Toilette de Constance." I must quote a few lines out of it here and there, to enable the reader who has not the book by him, to understand its close.

"Vite, Anna, vite ; au miroir
Plus vite, Anna. L'heure s'avance,
Et je vais au bal ce soir
Chez l'ambassadeur de France.

Y pensez vous, ils sont fanés, ces nœuds,
Ils sont d'hier, mon Dieu, comme tout passe !
Que du réseau qui retient mes cheveux
Les glands d'azur retombent avec grâce.
Plus haut ! Plus bas ! Vous ne comprenez rien !
Que sur mon front ce saphir étincelle :
Vous me piquez, mal-adroite. Ah, c'est bien,
Bien,—chère Anna ! Je t'aime, je suis belle.

Celui qu'en vain je voudrais oublier
(Anna, ma robe) il y sera, j'espère.
(Ah, fi, profane, est-ce là mon collier ?
Quoi ! ces grains d'or bénits par le Saint Père !)
Il y sera ; Dieu, s'il pressait ma main
En y pensant, à peine je respire ;
Père Anselmo doit m'entendre demain,
Comment ferai-je, Anna, pour tout lui dire ?

Vîte un coup d'œil au miroir,
Le dernier. —— J'ai l'assurance
Qu'on va m'adorer ce soir
Chez l'ambassadeur de France.

Près du foyer, Constance s'admirait.
Dieu ! sur sa robe il vole une étincelle !
Au feu. Courez ; Quand l'espoir l'enivrait
Tout perdre ainsi ! Quoi ! Mourir,—et si belle !
L'horrible feu ronge avec volupté
Ses bras, son sein, et l'entoure, et s'élève,
Et sans pitie dévore sa beauté,
Ses dixhuit ans, hélas, et son doux rêve !

Adieu, bal, plaisir, amour !
On disait, Pauvre Constance !
Et on dansait, jusqu'au jour,
Chez l'ambassadeur de France."

Yes, that is the fact of it. Right or wrong, the poet does not say. What you may think about it, he does not know. He has nothing to do with that. There lie the ashes of the dead girl in her chamber. There they danced, till the morning, at the Ambassador's of France. Make what you will of it.

If the reader will look through the ballad, of which I have quoted only about the third part, he will find that there is not, from beginning to end of it, a single poetical (so called) expression, except in one stanza. The girl speaks as simple prose as may be ; there is not a word she would not have actually used as she was dressing. The poet stands by, impassive as a statue, recording her words just as they come. At last the doom seizes her, and in the very presence of death, for an instant, his own emotions conquer him. He records no longer the facts only, but the facts as they seem to him. The fire gnaws with *voluptuousness—without pity.* It is soon past. The fate is fixed for ever ; and he retires into his pale and crystalline atmosphere of truth. He closes all with the calm veracity,

"They said, 'Poor Constance !'"

§ 14. Now in this there is the exact type of the consummate poetical temperament. For, be it clearly and constantly remembered, that the greatness of a poet depends upon the two faculties, acuteness of feeling, and command of it. A poet is

great, first in proportion to the strength of his passion, and then, that strength being granted, in proportion to his government of it; there being, however, always a point beyond which it would be inhuman and monstrous if he pushed this government, and, therefore, a point at which all feverish and wild fancy becomes just and true. Thus the destruction of the kingdom of Assyria cannot be contemplated firmly by a prophet of Israel. The fact is too great, too wonderful. It overthrows him, dashes him into a confused element of dreams. All the world is, to his stunned thought, full of strange voices. "Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, 'Since thou art gone down to the grave, no feller is come up against us.'" So, still more, the thought of the presence of Deity cannot be borne without this great astonishment. "The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands."

§ 15. But by how much this feeling is noble when it is justified by the strength of its cause, by so much it is ignoble when there is not cause enough for it; and beyond all other ignobleness is the mere affectation of it, in hardness of heart. Simply bad writing may almost always, as above noticed, be known by its adoption of these fanciful metaphorical expressions, as a sort of current coin; yet there is even a worse, at least a more harmful, condition of writing than this, in which such expressions are not ignorantly and feelinglessly caught up, but, by some master, skilful in handling, yet insincere, deliberately wrought out with chill and studied fancy; as if we should try to make an old lava stream look red-hot again, by covering it with dead leaves, or white-hot, with hoar-frost.

When Young is lost in veneration, as he dwells on the character of a truly good and holy man, he permits himself for a moment to be overborne by the feeling so far as to exclaim—

> "Where shall I find him? angels, tell me where.
> You know him; he is near you; point him out.
> Shall I see glories beaming from his brow,
> Or trace his footsteps by the rising flowers?"

This emotion has a worthy cause, and is thus true and right. But now hear the cold-hearted Pope say to a shepherd girl—

" Where'er you walk, cool gales shall fan the glade!
Trees, where you sit, shall crowd into a shade;
Your praise the birds shall chant in every grove,
And winds shall waft it to the powers above.
But would you sing, and rival Orpheus' strain,
The wondering forests soon should dance again;
The moving mountains hear the powerful call,
And headlong streams hang, listening, in their fall."

This is not, nor could it for a moment be mistaken for, the language of passion. It is simple falsehood, uttered by hypocrisy; definite absurdity, rooted in affectation, and coldly asserted in the teeth of nature and fact. Passion will indeed go far in deceiving itself; but it must be a strong passion, not the simple wish of a lover to tempt his mistress to sing. Compare a very closely parallel passage in Wordsworth, in which the lover has lost his mistress:

" Three years had Barbara in her grave been laid,
When thus his moan he made:—

'Oh, move, thou cottage, from behind yon oak,
Or let the ancient tree uprooted lie,
That in some other way yon smoke
May mount into the sky.

If still behind yon pine-tree's ragged bough,
Headlong, the waterfall must come,
Oh, let it, then, be dumb—
Be anything, sweet stream, but that which thou art now.'"

Here is a cottage to be moved, if not a mountain, and a water-fall to be silent, if it is not to hang listening; but with what different relation to the mind that contemplates them! Here, in the extremity of its agony, the soul cries out wildly for relief, which at the same moment it partly knows to be impossible, but partly believes possible, in a vague impression that a miracle *might* be wrought to give relief even to a less sore distress,—that nature is kind, and God is kind, and that grief is strong; it knows not well what *is* possible to such grief. To silence a stream, to move a cottage wall,—one might think it could do as much as that!

§ 16. I believe these instances are enough to illustrate the main point I insist upon respecting the pathetic fallacy,—that

so far as it *is* a fallacy, it is always the sign of a morbid state of mind, and comparatively of a weak one. Even in the most inspired prophet it is a sign of the incapacity of his human sight or thought to bear what has been revealed to it. In ordinary poetry, if it is found in the thoughts of the poet himself, it is at once a sign of his belonging to the inferior school; if in the thoughts of the characters imagined by him, it is right or wrong according to the genuineness of the emotion from which it springs; always, however, implying necessarily *some* degree of weakness in the character.

Take two most exquisite instances from master hands. The Jessy of Shenstone, and the Ellen of Wordsworth, have both been betrayed and deserted. Jessy, in the course of her most touching complaint, says:

> "If through the garden's flowery tribes I stray,
> Where bloom the jasmines that could once allure,
> 'Hope not to find delight in us,' they say,
> 'For we are spotless, Jessy; we are pure.'"

Compare with this some of the words of Ellen:

> "'Ah, why,' said Ellen, sighing to herself,
> 'Why do not words, and kiss, and solemn pledge,
> And nature, that is kind in woman's breast,
> And reason, that in man is wise and good,
> And fear of Him who is a righteous Judge,—
> Why do not these prevail for human life,
> To keep two hearts together, that began
> Their springtime with one love, and that have need
> Of mutual pity and forgiveness, sweet
> To grant, or be received; while that poor bird—
> O, come and hear him! Thou who hast to me
> Been faithless, hear him;—though a lowly creature,
> One of God's simple children, that yet know not
> The Universal Parent, *how* he sings!
> As if he wished the firmament of heaven
> Should listen, and give back to him the voice
> Of his triumphant constancy and love.
> The proclamation that he makes, how far
> His darkness doth transcend our fickle light.'"

The perfection of both these passages, as far as regards truth and tenderness of imagination in the two poets, is quite insu-

perable. But, of the two characters imagined, Jessy is weaker than Ellen, exactly in so far as something appears to her to be in nature which is not. The flowers do not really reproach her. God meant them to comfort her, not to taunt her; they would do so if she saw them rightly.

Ellen, on the other hand, is quite above the slightest erring emotion. There is not the barest film of fallacy in all her thoughts. She reasons as calmly as if she did not feel. And, although the singing of the bird suggests to her the idea of its desiring to be heard in heaven, she does not for an instant admit any veracity in the thought. "As if," she says,—"I know he means nothing of the kind; but it does verily seem as if." The reader will find, by examining the rest of the poem, that Ellen's character is throughout consistent in this clear though passionate strength.

It then being, I hope, now made clear to the reader in all respects that the pathetic fallacy is powerful only so far as it is pathetic, feeble so far as it is fallacious, and, therefore, that the dominion of Truth is entire, over this, as over every other natural and just state of the human mind, we may go on to the subject for the dealing with which this prefatory inquiry became necessary; and why necessary, we shall see forthwith.*

* I cannot quit this subject without giving two more instances, both exquisite, of the pathetic fallacy, which I have just come upon, in Maude:

"For a great speculation had fail'd;
And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with despair;
And out he walk'd, when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,
And the *flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air.*"

"There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near!'
And the white rose weeps, 'She is late.'
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear!'
And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'"

CHAPTER XIII.

OF CLASSICAL LANDSCAPE.

§ 1. My reason for asking the reader to give so much of his time to the examination of the pathetic fallacy was, that, whether in literature or in art, he will find it eminently characteristic of the modern mind; and in the landscape, whether of literature or art, he will also find the modern painter endeavoring to express something which he, as a living creature, imagines in the lifeless object, while the classical and mediæval painters were content with expressing the unimaginary and actual qualities of the object itself. It will be observed that, according to the principle stated long ago, I use the words painter and poet quite indifferently, including in our inquiry the landscape of literature, as well as that of painting; and this the more because the spirit of classical landscape has hardly been expressed in any other way than by words.

§ 2. Taking, therefore, this wide field, it is surely a very notable circumstance, to begin with, that this pathetic fallacy is eminently characteristic of modern painting. For instance, Keats, describing a wave, breaking, out at sea, says of it—

> "Down whose green back the short-lived foam, all hoar,
> Bursts gradual, with a wayward indolence."

That is quite perfect, as an example of the modern manner. The idea of the peculiar action with which foam rolls down a long, large wave could not have been given by any other words so well as by this "wayward indolence." But Homer would never have written, never thought of, such words. He could not by any possibility have lost sight of the great fact that the wave, from the beginning to the end of it, do what it might, was still nothing else than salt water; and that salt water could

not be either wayward or indolent. He will call the waves "over-roofed," "full-charged," "monstrous," "compact-black," "dark-clear," "violet-colored," "wine-colored," and so on. But every one of these epithets is descriptive of pure physical nature. "Over-roofed" is the term he invariably uses of anything—rock, house, or wave—that nods over at the brow; the other terms need no explanation; they are as accurate and intense in truth as words can be, but they never show the slightest feeling of anything animated in the ocean. Black or clear, monstrous or violet-colored, cold salt water it is always, and nothing but that.

§ 3. "Well, but the modern writer, by his admission of the tinge of fallacy, has given an idea of something in the action of the wave which Homer could not, and surely, therefore, has made a step in advance? Also there appears to be a degree of sympathy and feeling in the one writer, which there is not in the other; and as it has been received for a first principle that writers are great in proportion to the intensity of their feelings, and Homer seems to have no feelings about the sea but that it is black and deep, surely in this respect also the modern writer is the greater?"

Stay a moment. Homer *had* some feeling about the sea; a faith in the animation of it much stronger than Keats's. But all this sense of something living in it, he separates in his mind into a great abstract image of a Sea Power. He never says the waves rage, or the waves are idle. But he says there is somewhat in, and greater than, the waves, which rages, and is idle, and *that* he calls a god.

§ 4. I do not think we ever enough endeavor to enter into what a Greek's real notion of a god was. We are so accustomed to the modern mockeries of the classical religion, so accustomed to hear and see the Greek gods introduced as living personages, or invoked for help, by men who believe neither in them nor in any other gods, that we seem to have infected the Greek ages themselves with the breath, and dimmed them with the shade, of our hypocrisy; and are apt to think that Homer, as we know that Pope, was merely an ingenious fabulist; nay, more than this, that all the nations of past time were ingenious fabulists also, to whom the universe was a lyrical drama, and by whom

whatsoever was said about it was merely a witty allegory, or a graceful lie, of which the entire upshot and consummation was a pretty statue in the middle of the court, or at the end of the garden.

This, at least, is one of our forms of opinion about Greek faith; not, indeed, possible altogether to any man of honesty or ordinary powers of thought; but still so venomously inherent in the modern philosophy that all the pure lightning of Carlyle cannot as yet quite burn it out of any of us. And then, side by side with this mere infidel folly, stands the bitter short-sightedness of Puritanism, holding the classical god to be either simply an idol,—a block of stone ignorantly, though sincerely, worshipped,—or else an actual diabolic or betraying power, usurping the place of god.

§ 5. Both these Puritanical estimates of Greek deity are of course to some extent true. The corruption of classical worship is barren idolatry; and that corruption was deepened, and variously directed to their own purposes, by the evil angels. But this was neither the whole, nor the principal part, of Pagan worship. Pallas was not, in the pure Greek mind, merely a powerful piece of ivory in a temple at Athens; neither was the choice of Leonidas between the alternatives granted him by the oracle, of personal death, or ruin to his country, altogether a work of the Devil's prompting.

§ 6. What, then, was actually the Greek god? In what way were these two ideas of human form, and divine power, credibly associated in the ancient heart, so as to become a subject of true faith, irrespective equally of fable, allegory, superstitious trust in stone, and demoniacal influence?

It seems to me that the Greek had exactly the same instinctive feeling about the elements that we have ourselves; that to Homer, as much as to Casimir de la Vigne, fire seemed ravenous and pitiless; to Homer, as much as to Keats, the sea-wave appeared wayward or idle, or whatever else it may be to the poetical passion. But then the Greek reasoned upon this sensation, saying to himself: "I can light the fire, and put it out; I can dry this water up, or drink it. It cannot be the fire or the water that rages, or that is wayward. But it must be something *in* this fire and *in* the water, which I cannot destroy by

extinguishing the one, or evaporating the other, any more than I destroy myself by cutting off my finger; *I* was *in* my finger, —something of me at least was; I had a power over it, and felt pain in it, though I am still as much myself when it is gone. So there may be a power in the water which is not water, but to which the water is as a body;—which can strike with it, move in it, suffer in it, yet not be destroyed in it. This something, this great Water Spirit, I must not confuse with the waves, which are only its body. *They* may flow hither and thither, increase or diminish. *That* must be indivisible—imperishable—a god. So of fire also; those rays which I can stop, and in the midst of which I cast a shadow, cannot be divine, nor greater than I. They cannot feel, but there may be something in them that feels,—a glorious intelligence, as much nobler and more swift than mine, as these rays, which are its body, are nobler and swifter than my flesh;—the spirit of all light, and truth, and melody, and revolving hours."

§ 7. It was easy to conceive, farther, that such spirits should be able to assume at will a human form, in order to hold intercourse with men, or to perform any act for which their proper body, whether fire, earth, or air, was unfitted. And it would have been to place them beneath, instead of above, humanity, if, assuming the form of man, they could not also have tasted his pleasures. Hence the easy step to the more or less material ideas of deities, which are apt at first to shock us, but which are indeed only dishonorable so far as they represent the gods as false and unholy. It is not the materialism, but the vice, which degrades the conception; for the materialism itself is never positive or complete. There is always some sense of exaltation in the spiritual and immortal body; and of a power proceeding from the visible form through all the infinity of the element ruled by the particular god. The precise nature of the idea is well seen in the passage of the Iliad which describes the river Scamander defending the Trojans against Achilles. In order to remonstrate with the hero, the god assumes a human form, which nevertheless is in some way or other instantly recognized by Achilles as that of the river-god: it is addressed at once as a river, not as a man; and its voice is the voice of a

river, "out of the deep whirlpools." * Achilles refuses to obey its commands; and from the human form it returns instantly into its natural or divine one, and endeavors to overwhelm him with waves. Vulcan defends Achilles, and sends fire against the river, which suffers in its water-body, till it is able to bear no more. At last even the "nerve of the river," or "strength of the river" (note the expression), feels the fire, and this "strength of the river" addresses Vulcan in supplications for respite. There is in this precisely the idea of a vital part of the river-body, which acted and felt, and which, if the fire reached it, was death, just as would be the case if it touched a vital part of the human body. Throughout the passage the manner of conception is perfectly clear and consistent; and if, in other places, the exact connection between the ruling spirit and the thing ruled is not so manifest, it is only because it is almost impossible for the human mind to dwell long upon such subjects without falling into inconsistencies, and gradually slackening its effort to grasp the entire truth; until the more spiritual part of it slips from its hold, and only the human form of the god is left, to be conceived and described as subject to all the errors of humanity. But I do not believe that the idea ever weakens itself down to mere allegory. When Pallas is said to attack and strike down Mars, it does not mean merely that Wisdom at that moment prevailed against Wrath. It means that there are indeed two great spirits, one entrusted to guide the human soul to wisdom and chastity, the other to kindle wrath and prompt to battle. It means that these two spirits, on the spot where, and at the moment when, a great contest was to be decided between all that they each governed in man, then and there assumed human form, and human weapons, and did verily and materially strike at each other, until the Spirit of Wrath was crushed. And when Diana is said to hunt with her nymphs in the woods, it does not mean merely as Wordsworth puts it, that the poet or shepherd saw the moon and stars glancing between the branches of the trees, and wished to say so figuratively. It

* Compare Lay of the Last Minstrel, canto i. stanza 15., and canto v. stanza 2. In the first instance, the river-spirit is accurately the Homeric god, only Homer would have believed in it,—Scott did not; at least not altogether.

means that there is a living spirit, to which the light of the moon is a body; which takes delight in glancing between the clouds and following the wild beasts as they wander through the night; and that this spirit sometimes assumes a perfect human form, and in this form, with real arrows, pursues and slays the wild beasts, which with its mere arrows of moonlight it could not slay; retaining, nevertheless, all the while, its power, and being in the moonlight, and in all else that it rules.

§ 8. There is not the smallest inconsistency or unspirituality in this conception. If there were, it would attach equally to the appearance of the angels to Jacob, Abraham, Joshua, or Manoah. In all those instances the highest authority which governs our own faith requires us to conceive divine power clothed with a human form (a form so real that it is recognized for superhuman only by its "doing wondrously"), and retaining, nevertheless, sovereignty and omnipresence in all the world. This is precisely, as I understand it, the heathen idea of a God; and it is impossible to comprehend any single part of the Greek mind until we grasp this faithfully, not endeavoring to explain it away in any wise, but accepting, with frank decision and definition, the tangible existence of its deities;—blue-eyed—white-fleshed—human-hearted,—capable at their choice of meeting man absolutely in his own nature—feasting with him—talking with him—fighting with him, eye to eye, or breast to breast, as Mars with Diomed; or else, dealing with him in a more retired spirituality, as Apollo sending the plague upon the Greeks, when his quiver rattles at his shoulders as he moves, and yet the darts sent forth of it strike not as arrows, but as plague; or, finally, retiring completely into the material universe which they properly inhabit, and dealing with man through that, as Scamander with Achilles through his waves.

§ 9. Nor is there anything whatever in the various actions recorded of the gods, however apparently ignoble, to indicate weakness of belief in them. Very frequently things which appear to us ignoble are merely the simplicities of a pure and truthful age. When Juno beats Diana about the ears with her own quiver, for instance, we start at first, as if Homer could not have believed that they were both real goddesses. But what should Juno have done? Killed Diana with a look? Nay, she

neither wished to do so, nor could she have done so, by the very faith of Diana's goddess-ship. Diana is as immortal as herself. Frowned Diana into submission? But Diana had come expressly to try conclusions with her, and will by no means be frowned into submission. Wounded her with a celestial lance? That sounds more poetical, but it is in reality partly more savage, and partly more absurd, than Homer. More savage, for it makes Juno more cruel, therefore less divine; and more absurd, for it only seems elevated in tone, because we use the word "celestial," which means nothing. What sort of a thing is a "celestial" lance? Not a wooden one. Of what then? Of moonbeams, or clouds, or mist. Well, therefore, Diana's arrows were of mist too; and her quiver, and herself, and Juno, with her lance, and all, vanish into mist. Why not have said at once, if that is all you mean, that two mists met, and one drove the other back? That would have been rational and intelligible, but not to talk of celestial lances. Homer had no such misty fancy; he believed the two goddesses were there in true bodies, with true weapons, on the true earth; and still I ask, what should Juno have done? Not beaten Diana? No; for it is un-lady-like. Un-English-lady-like, yes; but by no means un-Greek-lady-like, nor even un-natural-lady-like. If a modern lady does *not* beat her servant or her rival about the ears, it is oftener because she is too weak, or too proud, than because she is of purer mind than Homer's Juno. She will not strike them; but she will overwork the one or slander the other without pity; and Homer would not have thought that one whit more goddess-like than striking them with her open hand.

§ 10. If, however, the reader likes to suppose that while the two goddesses in personal presence thus fought with arrow and quiver, there was also a broader and vaster contest supposed by Homer between the elements they ruled; and that the goddess of the heavens, as she struck the goddess of the moon on the flushing cheek, was at the same instant exercising omnipresent power in the heavens themselves, and gathering clouds, with which, filled with the moon's own arrows or beams, she was encumbering and concealing the moon; he is welcome to this out-carrying of the idea, provided that he does not pretend to make it an interpretation instead of a mere extension, nor think

to explain away my real, running, beautiful beaten Diana, into a moon behind clouds.*

§ 11. It is only farther to be noted, that the Greek conception of Godhead, as it was much more real than we usually suppose, so it was much more bold and familiar than to a modern mind would be possible. I shall have something more to observe, in a little while, of the danger of our modern habit of endeavoring to raise ourselves to something like comprehension of the truth of divinity, instead of simply believing the words in which the Deity reveals Himself to us. The Greek erred rather on the other side, making hardly any effort to conceive divine mind as above the human; and no more shrinking from frank intercourse with a divine being, or dreading its immediate presence, than that of the simplest of mortals. Thus Atrides, enraged at his sword's breaking in his hand upon the helmet of Paris, after he had expressly invoked the assistance of Jupiter, exclaims aloud, as he would to a king who had betrayed him, "Jove, Father, there is not another god more evil-minded than thou!" and Helen, provoked at Paris's defeat, and oppressed with pouting shame both for him and for herself, when Venus appears at her side, and would lead her back to the delivered Paris, impatiently tells the goddess to "go and take care of Paris herself."

§ 12. The modern mind is naturally, but vulgarly and unjustly, shocked by this kind of familiarity. Rightly understood, it is not so much a sign of misunderstanding of the divine nature as of good understanding of the human. The Greek lived, in all things, a healthy, and, in a certain degree, a perfect life. He had no morbid or sickly feeling of any kind. He was accustomed to face death without the slightest shrinking, to undergo all kinds of bodily hardship without complaint, and to do what he supposed right and honorable, in most cases, as a matter of course. Confident of his own immortality, and of the power of abstract justice, he expected to be dealt with in

* Compare the exquisite lines of Longfellow on the sunset in the Golden Legend:—

"The day is done, and slowly from the scene
The stooping sun upgathers his spent shafts,
And puts them back into his golden quiver."

the next world as was right, and left the matter much in his gods' hands; but being thus immortal, and finding in his own soul something which it seemed quite as difficult to master, as to rule the elements, he did not feel that it was an appalling superiority in those gods to have bodies of water, or fire, instead of flesh, and to have various work to do among the clouds and waves, out of his human way; or sometimes, even, in a sort of service to himself. Was not the nourishment of herbs and flowers a kind of ministering to his wants? were not the gods in some sort his husbandmen, and spirit-servants? Their mere strength or omnipresence did not seem to him a distinction absolutely terrific. It might be the nature of one being to be in two places at once, and of another to be only in one; but that did not seem of itself to infer any absolute lordliness of one nature above the other, any more than an insect must be a nobler creature than a man, because it can see on four sides of its head, and the man only in front. They could kill him or torture him, it was true; but even that not unjustly, or not for ever. There was a fate, and a Divine Justice, greater than they; so that if they did wrong, and he right, he might fight it out with them, and have the better of them at last. In a general way, they were wiser, stronger, and better than he; and to ask counsel of them, to obey them, to sacrifice to them, to thank them for all good, this was well; but to be utterly downcast before them, or not to tell them his mind in plain Greek if they seemed to him to be conducting themselves in an ungodly manner,—this would not be well.

§ 13. Such being their general idea of the gods, we can now easily understand the habitual tone of their feelings towards what was beautiful in nature. With us, observe, the idea of the Divinity is apt to get separated from the life of nature; and imagining our God upon a cloudy throne, far above the earth, and not in the flowers or waters, we approach those visible things with a theory that they are dead, governed by physical laws, and so forth. But coming to them, we find the theory fail; that they are not dead; that, say what we choose about them, the instinctive sense of their being alive is too strong for us; and in scorn of all physical law, the wilful fountain sings, and the kindly flowers rejoice. And then, puzzled, and yet happy;

pleased, and yet ashamed of being so; accepting sympathy from nature, which we do not believe it gives, and giving sympathy to nature, which we do not believe it receives,—mixing, besides, all manner of purposeful play and conceit with these involuntary fellowships,—we fall necessarily into the curious web of hesitating sentiment, pathetic fallacy, and wandering fancy, which form a great part of our modern view of nature. But the Greek never removed his god out of nature at all; never attempted for a moment to contradict his instinctive sense that God was everywhere. "The tree *is* glad," said he, "I know it is; I can cut it down; no matter, there was a nymph in it. The water *does* sing," said he; "I can dry it up; but no matter, there was a naiad in it." But in thus clearly defining his belief, observe, he threw it entirely into a human form, and gave his faith to nothing but the image of his own humanity. What sympathy and fellowship he had, were always for the spirit *in* the stream, not for the stream; always for the dryad *in* the wood, not for the wood. Content with this human sympathy, he approached the actual waves and woody fibres with no sympathy at all. The spirit that ruled them, he received as a plain fact. Them, also, ruled and material, he received as plain facts; they, without their spirit, were dead enough. A rose was good for scent, and a stream for sound and coolness; for the rest, one was no more than leaves, the other no more than water; he could not make anything else of them; and the divine power, which was involved in their existence, having been all distilled away by him into an independent Flora or Thetis, the poor leaves or waves were left, in mere cold corporealness, to make the most of their being discernibly red and soft, clear and wet, and unacknowledged in any other power whatsoever.

§ 14. Then, observe farther, the Greeks lived in the midst of the most beautiful nature, and were as familiar with blue sea, clear air, and sweet outlines of mountain, as we are with brick walls, black smoke, and level fields. This perfect familiarity rendered all such scenes of natural beauty unexciting, if not indifferent to them, by lulling and overwearying the imagination as far as it was concerned with such things; but there was another kind of beauty which they found it required effort to

obtain, and which, when thoroughly obtained, seemed more glorious than any of this wild loveliness—the beauty of the human countenance and form. This, they perceived, could only be reached by continual exercise of virtue; and it was in Heaven's sight, and theirs, all the more beautiful because it needed this self-denial to obtain it. So they set themselves to reach this, and having gained it, gave it their principal thoughts, and set it off with beautiful dress as best they might. But making this their object, they were obliged to pass their lives in simple exercise and disciplined employments. Living wholesomely, giving themselves no fever fits, either by fasting or over-eating, constantly in the open air, and full of animal spirit and physical power, they became incapable of every morbid condition of mental emotion. Unhappy love, disappointed ambition, spiritual despondency, or any other disturbing sensation, had little power over the well-braced nerves, and healthy flow of the blood; and what bitterness might yet fasten on them was soon boxed or raced out of a boy, and spun or woven out of a girl, or danced out of both. They had indeed their sorrows, true and deep, but still, more like children's sorrows than ours, whether bursting into open cry of pain, or hid with shuddering under the veil, still passing over the soul as clouds do over heaven, not sullying it, not mingling with it;—darkening it perhaps long or utterly, but still not becoming one with it, and for the most part passing away in dashing rain of tears, and leaving the man unchanged; in nowise affecting, as our sorrow does, the whole tone of his thought and imagination thenceforward.

How far our melancholy may be deeper and wider than theirs, in its roots and view, and therefore nobler, we shall consider presently; but at all events, they had the advantage of us in being entirely free from all those dim and feverish sensations which result from unhealthy state of the body. I believe that a large amount of the dreamy and sentimental sadness, tendency to reverie, and general patheticalness of modern life results merely from derangement of stomach; holding to the Greek life the same relation that the feverish night of an adult does to a child's sleep.

§ 15. Farther. The human beauty, which, whether in its

bodily being or in imagined divinity, had become, for the reasons we have seen, the principal object of culture and sympathy to these Greeks, was, in its perfection, eminently orderly, symmetrical, and tender. Hence, contemplating it constantly in this state, they could not but feel a proportionate fear of all that was disorderly, unbalanced, and rugged. Having trained their stoutest soldiers into a strength so delicate and lovely, that their white flesh, with their blood upon it, should look like ivory stained with purple;* and having always around them, in the motion and majesty of this beauty, enough for the full employment of their imagination, they shrank with dread or hatred from all the ruggedness of lower nature,—from the wrinkled forest bark, the jagged hill-crest, and irregular, inorganic storm of sky; looking to these for the most part as adverse powers, and taking pleasure only in such portions of the lower world as were at once conducive to the rest and health of the human frame, and in harmony with the laws of its gentler beauty.

§ 16. Thus, as far as I recollect, without a single exception, every Homeric landscape, intended to be beautiful, is composed of a fountain, a meadow, and a shady grove. This ideal is very interestingly marked, as intended for a perfect one, in the fifth book of the Odyssey; when Mercury himself stops for a moment, though on a message, to look at a landscape "which even an immortal might be gladdened to behold." This landscape consists of a cave covered with a running vine, all blooming into grapes, and surrounded by a grove of alder, poplar, and sweet-smelling cypress. Four fountains of white (foaming) water, springing *in succession* (mark the orderliness), and close to one another, flow away in different directions, through a meadow full of violets and parsley (parsley, to mark its moisture, being elsewhere called "marsh-nourished," and associated with the lotus);† the air is perfumed not only by these violets and by the sweet cypress, but by Calypso's fire of finely chopped cedar wood, which sends a smoke as of incense, through the island; Calypso herself is singing; and finally, upon the trees are resting, or roosting, owls, hawks, and "long-tongued sea-

* Iliad iv. 141. † Iliad ii. 776.

crows." Whether these last are considered as a part of the ideal landscape, as marine singing-birds, I know not; but the approval of Mercury appears to be elicited chiefly by the fountains and violet meadow.

§ 17. Now the notable things in this description are, first, the evident subservience of the whole landscape to human comfort, to the foot, the taste, or the smell; and, secondly, that throughout the passage there is not a single figurative word expressive of the things being in any wise other than plain grass, fruit or flower. I have used the term "spring" of the fountains, because, without doubt, Homer means that they sprang forth brightly, having their source at the foot of the rocks (as copious fountains nearly always have); but Homer does not say "spring," he says simply flow, and uses only one word for "growing softly," or "richly," of the tall trees, the vine, and the violets. There is, however, some expression of sympathy with the sea-birds; he speaks of them in precisely the same terms, as in other places of naval nations, saying they "have care of the works of the sea."

§ 18. If we glance through the references to pleasant landscape which occur in other parts of the Odyssey, we shall always be struck by this quiet subjection of their every feature to human service, and by the excessive similarity in the scenes. Perhaps the spot intended, after this, to be most perfect, may be the garden of Alcinous, where the principal ideas are, still more definitely, order, symmetry, and fruitfulness; the beds being duly ranged between rows of vines, which, as well as the pear, apple, and fig-trees, bear fruit continually, some grapes being yet sour, while others are getting black; there are plenty of "*orderly* square beds of herbs," chiefly leeks, and two fountains, one running through the garden, and one under the pavement of the palace to a reservoir for the citizens. Ulysses, pausing to contemplate this scene, is described nearly in the same terms as Mercury pausing to contemplate the wilder meadow; and it is interesting to observe, that, in spite of all Homer's love of symmetry, the god's admiration is excited by the free fountains, wild violets, and wandering vine; but the mortal's, by the vines in rows, the leeks in beds, and the fountains in pipes.

Ulysses has, however, one touching reason for loving vines in rows. His father had given him fifty rows for himself, when he was a boy, with corn between them (just as it now grows in Italy). Proving his identity afterwards to his father, whom he finds at work in his garden, "with thick gloves on, to keep his hands from the thorns," he reminds him of these fifty rows of vines, and of the "thirteen pear-trees and ten apple-trees" which he had given him; and Laertes faints upon his neck.

§ 19. If Ulysses had not been so much of a gardener, it might have been received as a sign of considerable feeling for landscape beauty, that, intending to pay the very highest possible compliment to the Princess Nausicaa (and having indeed, the moment before, gravely asked her whether she was a goddess or not), he says that he feels, at seeing her, exactly as he did when he saw the young palm-tree growing at Apollo's shrine at Delos. But I think the taste for trim hedges and upright trunks has its usual influence over him here also, and that he merely means to tell the princess that she is delightfully tall and straight.

§ 20. The princess is, however, pleased by his address, and tells him to wait outside the town, till she can speak to her father about him. The spot to which she directs him is another ideal piece of landscape, composed of a "beautiful grove of aspen poplars, a fountain, and a meadow," near the road-side; in fact, as nearly as possible such a scene as meets the eye of the traveller every instant on the much-despised lines of road through lowland France; for instance, on the railway between Arras and Amiens;—scenes, to my mind, quite exquisite in the various grouping and grace of their innumerable poplar avenues, casting sweet, tremulous shadows over their level meadows and labyrinthine streams. We know that the princess means aspen poplars, because soon afterwards we find her fifty maid-servants at the palace, all spinning, and in perpetual motion, compared to the "leaves of the tall poplar;" and it is with exquisite feeling that it is made afterwards* the chief tree in the groves of Proserpine; its light and quivering leafage having exactly the melancholy expression of fragility, faintness, and

* Odyssey. x. 510.

inconstancy which the ancients attributed to the disembodied spirit.* The likeness to the poplars by the streams of Amiens is more marked still in the Iliad, where the young Simois, struck by Ajax, falls to the earth "like an aspen that has grown in an irrigated meadow, smooth-trunked, the soft shoots springing from its top, which some coach-making man has cut down with his keen iron, that he may fit a wheel of it to a fair chariot, and it lies parching by the side of the stream." It is sufficiently notable that Homer, living in mountainous and rocky countries, dwells thus delightedly on all the *flat* bits; and so I think invariably the inhabitants of mountain countries do, but the inhabitants of the plains do not, in any similar way, dwell delightedly on mountains. The Dutch painters are perfectly contented with their flat fields and pollards: Rubens, though he had seen the Alps, usually composes his landscapes of a hayfield or two, plenty of pollards and willows, a distant spire, a Dutch house with a moat about it, a windmill, and a ditch. The Flemish sacred painters are the only ones who introduce mountains in the distance, as we shall see presently; but rather in a formal way than with any appearance of enjoyment. So Shakspere never speaks of mountains with the slightest joy, but only of lowland flowers, flat fields, and Warwickshire streams. And if we talk to the mountaineer, he will usually characterize his own country to us as a "pays affreux," or in some equivalent, perhaps even more violent, German term: but the lowland peasant does not think his country frightful; he either will have no ideas beyond it, or about it; or will think it a very perfect country, and be apt to regard any deviation from its general principle of flatness with extreme disfavor; as the Lincolnshire farmer in Alton Locke: "I'll shaw 'ee some'at like a field o' beans, I wool—none o' this here darned ups and downs o' hills, to shake a body's victuals out of his inwards—all so vlat as a barn door, for vorty mile on end—there's the country to live in!"

I do not say whether this be altogether right (though certainly not wholly wrong), but it seems to me that there must be in the simple freshness and fruitfulness of level land, in its pale

* Compare the passage in Dante referred to above, Chap. XII. § 6.

upright trees, and gentle lapse of silent streams, enough for the satisfaction of the human mind in general; and I so far agree with Homer, that if I had to educate an artist to the full perception of the meaning of the word "gracefulness" in landscape, I should send him neither to Italy nor to Greece, but simply to those poplar groves between Arras and Amiens.

§ 21. But to return more definitely to our Homeric landscape. When it is perfect, we have, as in the above instances, the foliage and meadows together; when imperfect, it is always either the foliage or the meadow; preëminently the meadow, or arable field. Thus, meadows of asphodel are prepared for the happier dead; and even Orion, a hunter among the mountains in his lifetime, pursues the ghosts of beasts in these asphodel meadows after death.* So the sirens sing in a meadow; and throughout the Odyssey there is a general tendency to the depreciation of poor Ithaca, because it is rocky, and only fit for goats, and has "no meadows;" for which reason Telemachus refuses Atrides's present of horses, congratulating the Spartan king at the same time on ruling over a plain which has "plenty of lotus in it, and rushes," with corn and barley. Note this constant dwelling on the marsh plants, or, at least, those which grow in flat and well-irrigated land, or beside streams: when Scamander, for instance, is restrained by Vulcan, Homer says, very sorrowfully, that "all his lotus, and reeds, and rushes were burnt;" and thus Ulysses, after being shipwrecked and nearly drowned, and beaten about the sea for many days and nights, on raft and mast, at last getting ashore at the mouth of a large river, casts himself down first upon its *rushes*, and then, in thankfulness, kisses the "corn-giving land," as most opposed, in his heart, to the fruitless and devouring sea.†

§ 22. In this same passage, also, we find some peculiar expressions of the delight which the Greeks had in trees, for, when Ulysses first comes in sight of land, which gladdens him, "as the reviving of a father from his sickness gladdens his children," it is not merely the sight of the land itself which

* Odyssey, xi. 571. xxiv. 13. The couch of Ceres, with Homer's usual faithfulness, is made of a *ploughed* field, v. 127.

† Odyssey, v. 398.

gives him such pleasure, but of the "land and *wood*." Homer never throws away any words, at least in such a place as this; and what in another poet would have been merely the filling up of the deficient line with an otherwise useless word, is in him the expression of the general Greek sense, that land of any kind was in nowise grateful or acceptable till there was *wood* upon it (or corn; but the corn, in the flats, could not be seen so far as the black masses of forest on the hill sides), and that, as in being rushy and corn-giving, the low land, so in being woody, the high land, was most grateful to the mind of the man who for days and nights had been wearied on the engulphing sea. And this general idea of wood and corn, as the types of the fatness of the whole earth, is beautifully marked in another place of the Odyssey,* where the sailors in a desert island, having no flour or corn to offer as a meat offering with their sacrifices, take the leaves of the trees, and scatter them over the burnt offering instead.

§ 23. But still, every expression of the pleasure which Ulysses has in this landing and resting, contains uninterruptedly the reference to the utility and sensible pleasantness of all things, not to their beauty. After his first grateful kiss given to the corn-growing land, he considers immediately how he is to pass the night: for some minutes hesitating whether it will be best to expose himself to the misty chill from the river, or run the risk of wild beasts in the wood. He decides for the wood, and finds in it a bower formed by a sweet and a wild olive tree, interlacing their branches, or—perhaps more accurately translating Homer's intensely graphic expression—"changing their branches with each other" (it is very curious how often, in an entanglement of wood, one supposes the branches to belong to the wrong trees), and forming a roof penetrated by neither rain, sun, nor wind. Under this bower Ulysses collects the "*vain* (or *frustrate*) outpouring of the dead leaves"—another exquisite expression, used elsewhere of useless grief or shedding of tears;—and, having got enough together, makes his bed of them, and goes to sleep, having covered himself up with them, "as embers are covered up with ashes."

* Odyssey, xii. 357.

Nothing can possibly be more intensely possessive of the *facts* than this whole passage; the sense of utter deadness and emptiness, and frustrate fall in the leaves; of dormant life in the human body,—the fire, and heroism, and strength of it, lulled under the dead brown heap, as embers under ashes, and the knitting of interchanged and close strength of living boughs above. But there is not the smallest apparent sense of there being *beauty* elsewhere than in the human being. The wreathed wood is admired simply as being a perfect roof for it; the fallen leaves only as being a perfect bed for it; and there is literally no more excitement of emotion in Homer, as he describes them, nor does he expect us to be more excited or touched by hearing about them, than if he had been telling us how the chamber-maid at the Bull aired the four-poster, and put on two extra blankets.

§ 24. Now, exactly this same contemplation of subservience to human use makes the Greek take some pleasure in *rocks*, when they assume one particular form, but one only—that of a *cave*. They are evidently quite frightful things to him under any other condition, and most of all if they are rough and jagged; but if smooth, looking "sculptured," like the sides of a ship, and forming a cave or shelter for him, he begins to think them endurable. Hence, associating the ideas of rich and sheltering wood, sea, becalmed and made useful as a port by projecting promontories of rock, and smoothed caves or grottoes in the rocks themselves, we get the pleasantest idea which the Greek could form of a landscape, next to a marsh with poplars in it; not, indeed, if possible, ever to be without these last: thus, in commending the Cyclops' country as one possessed of every perfection, Homer first says: "They have soft *marshy* meadows near the sea, and good, rich, crumbling, ploughing-land, giving fine deep crops, and vines always giving fruit;" then, "a port so quiet, that they have no need of cables in it; and at the head of the port, a beautiful clear spring just *under a cave*, and *aspen poplars all round it.*" *

* Odyssey, ix. 132. &c. Hence Milton's

"From haunted spring, and dale,
Edged with poplar pale."

§ 25. This, it will be seen, is very nearly Homer's usual "ideal;" but, going into the middle of the island, Ulysses comes on a rougher and less agreeable bit, though still fulfilling certain required conditions of endurableness; a "cave shaded with laurels," which, having no poplars about it, is, however, meant to be somewhat frightful, and only fit to be inhabited by a Cyclops. So in the country of the Læstrygons, Homer, preparing his reader gradually for something very disagreeable, represents the rocks as bare and "exposed to the sun;" only with some smooth and slippery roads over them, by which the trucks bring down wood from the higher hills. Any one familiar with Swiss slopes of hills must remember how often he has descended, sometimes faster than was altogether intentional, by these same slippery woodman's track roads.

And thus, in general, whenever the landscape is intended to be lovely, it verges towards the ploughed land and poplars; or, at worst, to *woody* rocks; but, if intended to be painful, the rocks are bare and "sharp." This last epithet, constantly used by Homer for mountains, does not altogether correspond, in Greek, to the English term, nor is it intended merely to characterize the sharp mountain summits; for it never would be applied simply to the edge or point of a sword, but signifies rather "harsh," "bitter," or "painful," being applied habitually to fate, death, and in Od. ii. 333. to a halter; and, as expressive of general objectionableness and unpleasantness, to all high, dangerous, or peaked mountains, as the Malcian promontory (a much dreaded one), the crest of Parnassus, the Tereian mountain, and a grim or untoward, though, by keeping off the force of the sea, protective, rock at the mouth of the Jardanus; as well as habitually to inaccessible or impregnable fortresses built on heights.

§ 26. In all this I cannot too strongly mark the utter absence of any trace of the feeling for what we call the picturesque, and the constant dwelling of the writer's mind on what was available, pleasant, or useful; his ideas respecting all landscape being not uncharacteristically summed, finally, by Pallas herself; when, meeting Ulysses, who after his long wandering does not recognize his own country, and meaning to describe it

as politely and soothingly as possible, she says :*—"This Ithaca of ours is, indeed, a rough country enough, and not good for driving in; but, still, things might be worse: it has plenty of corn, and good wine, and *always rain*, and soft nourishing dew; and it has good feeding for goats and oxen, and all manner of wood, and springs fit to drink at all the year round."

We shall see presently how the blundering, pseudo-picturesque, pseudo-classical minds of Claude and the Renaissance landscape painters, wholly missing Homer's practical common sense, and equally incapable of feeling the quiet natural grace and sweetness of his asphodel meadows, tender aspen poplars, or running vines,—fastened on his *ports* and *caves*, as the only available features of his scenery; and appointed the type of "classical landscape" thenceforward to consist in a bay of insipid sea, and a rock with a hole through it.†

§ 27. It may indeed be thought that I am assuming too hastily that this was the general view of the Greeks respecting landscape, because it was Homer's. But I believe the true mind of a nation, at any period, is always best ascertainable by examining that of its greatest men; and that simpler and truer results will be attainable for us by simply comparing Homer, Dante, and Walter Scott, than by attempting (what my limits must have rendered absurdly inadequate, and in which, also, both my time and knowledge must have failed me) an analysis of the landscape in the range of contemporary literature. All that I can do, is to state the general impression which has been made upon me by my desultory reading, and to mark accurately the grounds for this impression, in the works of the greatest men. Now it is quite true that in others of the Greeks, especially in Æschylus and Aristophanes, there is infinitely more of modern feeling, of pathetic fallacy, love of picturesque or beautiful form, and other such elements, than there is in Homer; but then these appear to me just the parts of them which were not Greek, the elements of their minds by which (as one division of the human race always must be with subsequent

* Odyssey, xiii. 239. &c.

† Educated, as we shall see hereafter, first in this school, Turner gave the hackneyed composition a strange power and freshness, in his Glaucus and Scylla.

ones) they are connected with the mediævals and moderns. And without doubt, in his influence over future mankind, Homer is eminently the Greek of Greeks; if I were to associate any one with him it would be Herodotus, and I believe all I have said of the Homeric landscape will be found equally true of the Herodotean, as assuredly it will be of the Platonic; the contempt, which Plato sometimes expresses by the mouth of Socrates, for the country in general, except so far as it is shady, and has cicadas and running streams to make pleasant noises in it, being almost ludicrous. But Homer is the great type, and the more notable one because of his influence on Virgil, and, through him, on Dante, and all the after ages: and in like manner, if we can get the abstract of mediæval landscape out of Dante, it will serve us as well as if we had read all the songs of the troubadours, and help us to the farther changes in derivative temper, down to all modern time.

§ 28. I think, therefore, the reader may safely accept the conclusions about Greek landscape which I have got for him out of Homer; and in these he will certainly perceive something very different from the usual imaginations we form of Greek feelings. We think of the Greeks as poetical, ideal, imaginative, in the way that a modern poet or novelist is; supposing that their thoughts about their mythology and world were as visionary and artificial as ours are: but I think the passages I have quoted show that it was not so, although it may be difficult for us to apprehend the strange minglings in them of the elements of faith, which, in our days, have been blended with other parts of human nature in a totally different guise. Perhaps the Greek mind may be best imagined by taking, as its groundwork, that of a good, conscientious, but illiterate, Scotch Presbyterian Border farmer of a century or two back, having perfect faith in the bodily appearances of Satan and his imps; and in all kelpies, brownies, and fairies. Substitute for the indignant terrors in this man's mind, a general persuasion of the *Divinity*, more or less beneficent, yet faultful, of all these beings; that is to say, take away his belief in the demoniacal malignity of the fallen spiritual world, and lower, in the same degree, his conceptions of the angelical, retaining for him the same firm faith in both; keep his ideas about flowers and

beautiful scenery much as they are,—his delight in regular ploughed land and meadows, and a neat garden (only with rows of gooseberry bushes instead of vines,) being, in all probability, about accurately representative of the feelings of Ulysses; then, let the military spirit that is in him, glowing against the Border forager, or the foe of old Flodden and Chevy-Chase, be made more principal, with a higher sense of nobleness in soldiership, not as a careless excitement, but a knightly duty; and increased by high cultivation of every personal quality, not of mere shaggy strength, but graceful strength, aided by a softer climate, and educated in all proper harmony of sight and sound: finally, instead of an informed Christian, suppose him to have only the patriarchal Jewish knowledge of the Deity, and even this obscured by tradition, but still thoroughly solemn and faithful, requiring his continual service as a priest of burnt sacrifice and meat offering; and I think we shall get a pretty close approximation to the vital being of a true old Greek; some slight difference still existing in a feeling which the Scotch farmer would have of a pleasantness in blue hills and running streams, wholly wanting in the Greek mind; and perhaps also some difference of views on the subjects of truth and honesty. But the main points, the easy, athletic, strongly logical and argumentative, yet fanciful and [illegible]alous, characters of mind, would be very similar in both; and the most serious change in the substance of the stuff among the modifications above suggested as necessary to turn the Scot into the Greek, is that effect of softer climate and surrounding luxury, inducing the practice of various forms of polished art,—the more polished, because the practical and realistic tendency of the Hellenic mind (if my interpretation of it be right) would quite prevent it from taking pleasure in any irregularities of form, or imitations of the weeds and wildnesses of that mountain nature with which it thought itself born to contend. In its utmost refinement of work, it sought eminently for orderliness; carried the principle of the leeks in squares, and fountains in pipes, perfectly out in its streets and temples; formalized whatever decoration it put into its minor architectural mouldings, and reserved its whole heart and power to represent

the action of living men, or gods, though not unconscious, meanwhile, of

> "The simple, the sincere delight;
> The habitual scene of hill and dale
> The rural herds, the vernal gale;
> The tangled vetches' purple bloom;
> The fragrance of the bean's perfume,—
> Theirs, theirs alone, who cultivate the soil,
> And drink the cup of thirst, and eat the bread of toil."

CHAPTER XIV.

OF MEDIÆVAL LANDSCAPE:—FIRST, THE FIELDS.

§ 1. In our examination of the spirit of classical landscape, we were obliged to confine ourselves to what is left to us in written description. Some interesting results might indeed have been obtained by examining the Egyptian and Ninevite landscape sculpture, but in nowise conclusive enough to be worth the pains of the inquiry; for the landscape of sculpture is necessarily confined in range, and usually inexpressive of the complete feelings of the workman, being introduced rather to explain the place and circumstances of events, than for its own sake. In the Middle Ages, however, the case is widely different. We have written landscape, sculptured landscape, and painted landscape, all bearing united testimony to the tone of the national mind in almost every remarkable locality of Europe.

§ 2. That testimony, taken in its breadth, is very curiously conclusive. It marks the mediæval mind as agreeing altogether with the ancients, in holding that flat land, brooks, and groves of aspens, compose the pleasant places of the earth, and that rocks and mountains are, for inhabitation, altogether to be reprobated and detested; but as disagreeing with the classical mind totally in this other most important respect, that the pleasant flat land is never a ploughed field, nor a rich lotus meadow good for pasture, but *garden* ground covered with flowers, and divided by fragrant hedges, with a castle in the middle of it. The aspens are delighted in, not because they are good for "coach-making men" to make cart-wheels of, but because they are shady and graceful; and the fruit-trees, covered with delicious fruit, especially apple and orange, occupy still more important positions in the scenery. Singing-birds—not "sea-crows," but nightingales*—perch on every bough;

* The peculiar dislike felt by the mediævals for the *sea*, is so interesting a subject of inquiry, that I have reserved it for separate discussion in another work, in present preparation, "Harbors of England."

and the ideal occupation of mankind is not to cultivate either the garden or the meadow, but to gather roses and eat oranges in the one, and ride out hawking over the other.

Finally, mountain scenery, though considered as disagreeable for general inhabitation, is always introduced as being proper to meditate in, or to encourage communion with higher beings; and in the ideal landscape of daily life, mountains are considered agreeable things enough, so that they be far enough away.

In this great change there are three vital points to be noticed.

The first, the disdain of agricultural pursuits by the nobility; a fatal change, and one gradually bringing about the ruin of that nobility. It is expressed in the mediæval landscape by the eminently pleasurable and horticultural character of everything; by the fences, hedges, castle walls, and masses of useless, but lovely flowers, especially roses. The knights and ladies are represented always as singing, or making love, in these pleasant places. The idea of setting an old knight, like Laertes (whatever his state of fallen fortune), "with thick gloves on to keep his hands from the thorns," to prune a row of vines, would have been regarded as the most monstrous violation of the decencies of life; and a senator, once detected in the home employments of Cincinnatus, could, I suppose, thenceforward hardly have appeared in society.

§ 3. Three essential characters: 1. Pride in idleness.

The second vital point is the evidence of a more sentimental enjoyment of external nature. A Greek, wishing really to enjoy himself, shut himself into a beautiful atrium, with an excellent dinner, and a society of philosophical or musical friends. But a mediæval knight went into his pleasance, to gather roses and hear the birds sing; or rode out hunting or hawking. His evening feast, though riotous enough sometimes, was not the height of his day's enjoyment; and if the attractions of the world are to be shown typically to him, as opposed to the horrors of death, they are never represented by a full feast in a chamber, but by a delicate dessert in an orange grove, with musicians under the trees; or a ride on a May morning, hawk on fist.

§ 4. 2. Poetical observance of nature.

This change is evidently a healthy, and a very interesting one.

The third vital point is the marked sense that this hawking

and apple-eating are not altogether right; that there is something else to be done in the world than that; and that the mountains, as opposed to the pleasant garden-ground, are places where that other something may best be learned;—which is evidently a piece of infinite and new respect for the mountains, and another healthy change in the tone of the human heart.

§ 5. 3. Disturbed conscience.

Let us glance at the signs and various results of these changes, one by one.

The two first named, evil and good as they are, are very closely connected. The more poetical delight in external nature proceeds just from the fact that it is no longer looked upon with the eye of the farmer; and in proportion as the herbs and flowers cease to be regarded as useful, they are felt to be charming. Leeks are not now the most important objects in the garden, but lilies and roses; the herbage which a Greek would have looked at only with a view to the number of horses it would feed, is regarded by the mediæval knight as a green carpet for fair feet to dance upon, and the beauty of its softness and color is proportionally felt by him; while the brook, which the Greek rejoiced to dismiss into a reservoir under the palace threshold, would be, by the mediæval, distributed into pleasant pools, or forced into fountains; and regarded alternately as a mirror for fair faces, and a witchery to ensnare the sunbeams and the rainbow.

§ 6. Derivative characters: 1. Love of flowers.

And this change of feeling involves two others, very important. When the flowers and grass were regarded as means of life, and therefore (as the thoughtful laborer of the soil must always regard them) with the reverence due to those gifts of God which were most necessary to his existence; although their own beauty was less felt, their proceeding from the Divine hand was more seriously acknowledged, and the herb yielding seed, and fruit-tree yielding fruit, though in themselves less admired, were yet solemnly connected in the heart with the reverence of Ceres, Pomona, or Pan. But when the sense of these necessary uses was more or less lost, among the upper classes, by the delegation of the art of husbandry to the hands of the peasant, the flower and fruit,

§ 7. 2. Less definite gratitude to God.

whose bloom or richness thus became a mere source of pleasure, were regarded with less solemn sense of the Divine gift in them; and were converted rather into toys than treasures, chance gifts for gaiety, rather than promised rewards of labor; so that while the Greek could hardly have trodden the formal furrow, or plucked the clusters from the trellised vine, without reverent thoughts of the deities of field and leaf, who gave the seed to fructify, and the bloom to darken, the mediæval knight plucked the violet to wreathe in his lady's hair, or strewed the idle rose on the turf at her feet, with little sense of anything in the nature that gave them, but a frail, accidental, involuntary exuberance; while also the Jewish sacrificial system being now done away, as well as the Pagan mythology, and, with it, the whole conception of meat offering or firstfruits offering, the chiefest seriousness of all the thoughts connected with the gifts of nature faded from the minds of the classes of men concerned with art and literature; while the peasant, reduced to serf level, was incapable of imaginative thought, owing to his want of general cultivation. But on the other hand, exactly in proportion as the idea of definite spiritual presence in material nature was lost, the mysterious sense of *unaccountable* life in the things themselves would be increased, and the mind would instantly be laid open to all those currents of fallacious, but pensive and pathetic sympathy, which we have seen to be characteristic of modern times.

§ 8. 3. Gloom, caused by enforced solitude.

Farther: a singular difference would necessarily result from the far greater loneliness of baronial life, deprived as it was of all interest in agricultural pursuits. The palace of a Greek leader in early times might have gardens, fields, and farms around it, but was sure to be near some busy city or sea-port: in later times, the city itself became the principal dwelling-place, and the country was visited only to see how the farm went on, or traversed in a line of march. Far other was the life of the mediæval baron, nested on his solitary jut of crag; entering into cities only occasionally for some grave political or warrior's purpose, and, for the most part, passing the years of his life in lion-like isolation; the village inhabited by his retainers straggling indeed about the slopes of the rocks at his feet, but his own dwelling

standing gloomily apart, between them and the uncompanionable clouds, commanding, from sunset to sunrise, the flowing flame of some calm unvoyaged river, and the endless undulation of the untraversable hills. How different must the thoughts about nature have been, of the noble who lived among the bright marble porticos of the Greek groups of temple or palace,—in the midst of a plain covered with corn and olives, and by the shore of a sparkling and freighted sea,—from those of the master of some mountain promontory in the green recesses of Northern Europe, watching night by night, from amongst his heaps of storm-broken stone, rounded into towers, the lightning of the lonely sea flash round the sands of Harlech, or the mists changing their shapes for ever, among the changeless pines, that fringe the crests of Jura.

Nor was it without similar effect on the minds of men that their journeyings and pilgrimages became more frequent than those of the Greek, the extent of ground traversed in the course of them larger, and the mode of travel more companionless. To the Greek, a voyage to Egypt, or the Hellespont, was the subject of lasting fame and fable, and the forests of the Danube and the rocks of Sicily closed for him the gates of the intelligible world. What parts of that narrow world he crossed were crossed with fleets or armies; the camp always populous on the plain, and the ships drawn in cautious symmetry around the shore. But to the mediæval knight, from Scottish moor to Syrian sand, the world was one great exercise ground, or field of adventure; the staunch pacing of his charger penetrated the pathlessness of outmost forest, and sustained the sultriness of the most secret desert. Frequently alone,—or, if accompanied, for the most part only by retainers of lower rank, incapable of entering into complete sympathy with any of his thoughts,—he must have been compelled often to enter into dim companionship with the silent nature around him, and must assuredly sometimes have talked to the wayside flowers of his love, and to the fading clouds of his ambition.

§ 9. And frequent pilgrimage.

§ 10. But, on the other hand, the idea of retirement from the world for the sake of self-mortification, of combat with demons, or communion with angels, and with their King,—

authoritatively commended as it was to all men by the continual practice of Christ Himself,—gave to all mountain solitude at once a sanctity and a terror, in the mediæval mind, which were altogether different from anything that it had possessed in the un-Christian periods. On the one side, there was an idea of sanctity attached to rocky wilderness, because it had always been among hills that the Deity had manifested himself most intimately to men, and to the hills that His saints had nearly always retired for meditation, for especial communion with Him, and to prepare for death. Men acquainted with the history of Moses, alone at Horeb, or with Israel at Sinai,—of Elijah by the brook Cherith, and in the Horeb cave; of the deaths of Moses and Aaron on Hor and Nebo; of the preparation of Jephthah's daughter for her death among the Judea Mountains; of the continual retirement of Christ Himself to the mountains for prayer, His temptation in the desert of the Dead Sea, His sermon on the hills of Capernaum, His transfiguration on the crest of Tabor, and his evening and morning walks over Olivet for the four or five days preceding His crucifixion,—were not likely to look with irreverent or unloving eyes upon the blue hills that girded their golden horizon, or drew upon them the mysterious clouds out of the height of the darker heaven. But with this impression of their greater sanctity was involved also that of a peculiar terror. In all this,—their haunting by the memories of prophets, the presences of angels, and the everlasting thoughts and words of the Redeemer,—the mountain ranges seemed separated from the active world, and only to be fitly approached by hearts which were condemnatory of it. Just in so much as it appeared necessary for the noblest men to retire to the hill-recesses before their missions could be accomplished or their spirits perfected, in so far did the daily world seem by comparison to be pronounced profane and dangerous; and to those who loved that world, and its work, the mountains were thus voiceful with perpetual rebuke, and necessarily contemplated with a kind of pain and fear, such as a man engrossed by vanity feels at being by some accident forced to hear a startling sermon, or to assist at a funeral service. Every association of this kind was deepened by the practice and the precept of the time; and thousands of

4. Dread of mountains.

hearts, which might otherwise have felt that there was loveliness in the wild landscape, shrank from it in dread, because they knew that the monk retired to it for penance, and the hermit for contemplation. The horror which the Greek had felt for hills only when they were uninhabitable and barren, attached itself now to many of the sweetest spots of earth; the feeling was conquered by political interests, but never by admiration; military ambition seized the frontier rock, or maintained itself in the unassailable pass; but it was only for their punishment, or in their despair, that men consented to tread the crocused slopes of the Chartreuse, or the soft glades and dewy pastures of Vallombrosa.

§ 11. In all these modifications of temper and principle there appears much which tends to passionate, affectionate, or awe-struck observance of the features of natural scenery, closely resembling, in all but this superstitious dread of mountains, our feelings at the present day. But *one* character which the mediævals had in common with the ancients, and that exactly the most eminent character in both, opposed itself steadily to all the feelings we have hitherto been examining,—the admiration, namely, and constant watchfulness, of human beauty. Exercised in nearly the same manner as the Greeks, from their youth upwards, their countenances were cast even in a higher mould; for, although somewhat less regular in feature, and affected by minglings of Northern bluntness and stolidity of general expression, together with greater thinness of lip and shaggy formlessness of brow, these less sculpturesque features were, nevertheless, touched with a seriousness and refinement proceeding first from the modes of thought inculcated by the Christian religion, and secondly from their more romantic and various life. Hence a degree of personal beauty, both male and female, was attained in the Middle Ages, with which classical periods could show nothing for a moment comparable; and this beauty was set forth by the most perfect splendor, united with grace, in dress, which the human race have hitherto invented. The strength of their art-genius was directed in great part to this object; and their best workmen and most brilliant fanciers were employed in wreathing the mail or embroidering the robe. The exquisite arts of enamelling and chasing metal enabled them

to make the armor as radiant and delicate as the plumage of a tropical bird; and the most various and vivid imaginations were displayed in the alternations of color, and fiery freaks of form, on shield and crest; so that of all the beautiful things which the eyes of men could fall upon, in the world about them, the most beautiful must have been a young knight riding out in morning sunshine, and in faithful hope.

> "His broad, clear brow in sunlight glowed;
> On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
> From underneath his helmet flowed
> His coal-black curls, as on he rode.
> All in the blue, unclouded weather,
> Thick jewelled shone the saddle leather;
> The helmet and the helmet feather
> Burned like one burning flame together;
> And the gemmy bridle glittered free,
> Like to some branch of stars we see
> Hung in the golden galaxy."

§ 12. 5. Care for human beauty.

Now, the effect of this superb presence of human beauty on men in general was, exactly as it had been in Greek times, first, to turn their thoughts and glances in great part away from all other beauty but that, and to make the grass of the field take to them always more or less the aspect of a carpet to dance upon, a lawn to tilt upon, or a serviceable crop of hay; and, secondly, in what attention they paid to this lower nature, to make them dwell exclusively on what was graceful, symmetrical, and bright in color. All that was rugged, rough, dark, wild, unterminated, they rejected at once, as the domain of "salvage men" and monstrous giants: all that they admired was tender, bright, balanced, enclosed, symmetrical—only symmetrical in the noble and free sense: for what we moderns call "symmetry," or "balance," differs as much from mediæval symmetry as the poise of a grocer's scales, or the balance of an Egyptian mummy with its hands tied to its sides, does from the balance of a knight on his horse, striking with the battle-axe, at the gallop; the mummy's balance looking wonderfully perfect, and yet sure to be one-sided if you weigh the dust of it,—the knight's balance swaying and changing like the wind, and yet as true and accurate as the laws of life.

And this love of symmetry was still farther enhanced by the peculiar duties required of art at the time; for, in order to fit a flower or leaf for inlaying in armor, or showing clearly in glass, it was absolutely necessary to take away its complexity, and reduce it to the condition of a disciplined and orderly pattern; and this the more, because, for all military purposes, the device, whatever it was, had to be distinctly intelligible at extreme distance. That it should be a good imitation of nature, when seen near, was of no moment; but it was of highest moment that when first the knight's banner flashed in the sun at the turn of the mountain road, or rose, torn and bloody, through the drift of the battle dust, it should still be discernible what the bearing was.

§ 13. 6. Symmetrical government of design.

"At length, the freshening western blast
Aside the shroud of battle cast;
And first the ridge of mingled spears
Above the brightening cloud appears;
And in the smoke the pennons flew,
As in the storm the white sea-mew;
Then marked they, dashing broad and far
The broken billows of the war.
Wide raged the battle on the plain;
Spears shook, and falchions flashed amain;
Fell England's arrow-flight like rain;
Crests rose, and stooped, and rose again,
Wild and disorderly.
Amidst the scene of tumult, high,
They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly,
And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
And Edmund Howard's lion bright."

It was needed, not merely that they should see it was a falcon, but Lord Marmion's falcon; not only a lion, but the Howard's lion. Hence, to the one imperative end of *intelligibility*, every minor resemblance to nature was sacrificed, and above all, the *curved*, which are chiefly the confusing lines; so that the straight, elongated back, doubly elongated tail, projected and separate claws, and other rectilinear unnaturalnesses of form, became the means by which the leopard was, in midst of the mist and storm of battle, distinguished from the dog, or the lion from the wolf; the most admirable fierceness and vital-

ity being, in spite of these necessary changes (so often shallowly sneered at by the modern workman), obtained by the old designer.

Farther, it was necessary to the brilliant harmony of color, and clear setting forth of everything, that all confusing shadows, all dim and doubtful lines should be rejected: hence at once an utter denial of natural appearances by the great body of workmen; and a calm rest in a practice of representation which would make either boar or lion blue, scarlet, or golden, according to the device of the knight, or the need of such and such a color in that place of the pattern; and which wholly denied that any substance ever cast a shadow, or was affected by any kind of obscurity.

All this was in its way, and for its end, absolutely right, admirable, and delightful; and those who despise it, laugh at it, or derive no pleasure from it, are utterly ignorant of the highest principles of art, and are mere tyros and beginners in the practice of color. But, admirable though it might be, one necessary result of it was a farther withdrawal of the observation of men from the refined and subtle beauty of nature; so that the workman who first was led to think *lightly* of natural beauty, as being subservient to human, was next led to think *inaccurately* of natural beauty, because he had continually to alter and simplify it for his practical purposes.

§ 14. 7. Therefore, inaccurate rendering of nature.

§ 15. Now, assembling all these different sources of the peculiar mediæval feeling towards nature in one view, we have:

1st. Love of the garden instead of love of the farm, leading to a sentimental contemplation of nature, instead of a practical and agricultural one. (§§ 3. 4. 6.)

2nd. Loss of sense of actual Divine presence, leading to fancies of fallacious animation, in herbs, flowers, clouds, &c. (§ 7.)

3rd. Perpetual, and more or less undisturbed, companionship with wild nature. (§§ 8. 9.)

4th. Apprehension of demoniacal and angelic presence among mountains, leading to a reverent dread of them. (§ 10.)

5th. Principalness of delight in human beauty, leading to comparative contempt of natural objects. (§ 11.)

6th. Consequent love of order, light, intelligibility, and symmetry, leading to dislike of the wildness, darkness, and mystery of nature. (§ 12.)

7th. Inaccuracy of observance of nature, induced by the habitual practice of change on its forms. (§ 13.)

From these mingled elements, we should necessarily expect to find resulting, as the characteristic of mediæval landscape art, compared with Greek, a far higher sentiment about it, and affection for it, more or less subdued by still greater respect for the loveliness of man, and therefore subordinated entirely to human interests; mingled with curious traces of terror, piety, or superstition, and cramped by various formalisms,—some wise and necessary, some feeble, and some exhibiting needless ignorance and inaccuracy.

Under these lights, let us examine the facts.

§ 16. The landscape of the Middle Ages is represented in a central manner by the illuminations of the MSS. of Romances, executed about the middle of the fifteenth century. On one side of these stands the earlier landscape work, more or less treated as simple decoration; on the other, the later landscape work, becoming more or less affected with modern ideas and modes of imitation.

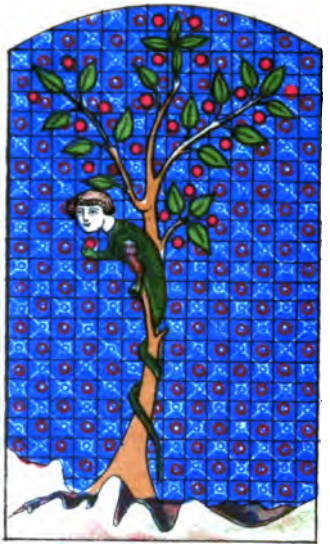
These central fifteenth century landscapes are almost invariably composed of a grove or two of tall trees, a winding river, and a castle, or a garden: the peculiar feature of both these last being *trimness;* the artist always dwelling especially on the fences; wreathing the espaliers indeed prettily with sweet-briar, and putting pots of orange-trees on the tops of the walls, but taking great care that there shall be no loose bricks in the one, nor broken stakes in the other,—the trouble and ceaseless warfare of the times having rendered security one of the first elements of pleasantness, and making it impossible for any artist to conceive Paradise but as surrounded by a moat, or to distinguish the road to it better than by its narrow wicket gate, and watchful porter.

§ 17. One of these landscapes is thus described by Macaulay: "We have an exact square, enclosed by the rivers Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates, each with a convenient bridge in the centre; rectangular beds of flowers; a long canal neatly bricked

and railed in; the tree of knowledge, clipped like one of the limes behind the Tuileries, standing in the centre of the grand alley; the snake turned round it, the man on the right hand, the woman on the left, and the beasts drawn up in an exact circle round them."

All this is perfectly true; and seems in the description very curiously foolish. The only curious folly, however, in the matter is the exquisite *naïveté* of the historian, in supposing that the quaint landscape indicates in the understanding of the painter so marvellous an inferiority to his own; whereas, it is altogether his own wit that is at fault, in not comprehending that nations, whose youth had been decimated among the sands and serpents of Syria, knew probably nearly as much about Eastern scenery as youths trained in the schools of the modern Royal Academy; and that this curious symmetry was entirely symbolic, only more or less modified by the various instincts which I have traced above. Mr. Macaulay is evidently quite unaware that the serpent with the human head, and body twisted round the tree, was the universally accepted symbol of the evil angel, from the dawn of art up to Michael Angelo; that the greatest sacred artists invariably place the man on the one side of the tree, the woman on the other, in order to denote the enthroned and balanced dominion about to fall by temptation; that the beasts are ranged (when they *are* so, though this is much more seldom the case,) in a circle round them, expressly to mark that they were then not wild, but obedient, intelligent, and orderly beasts; and that the four rivers are trenched and enclosed on the four sides, to mark that the waters which now wander in waste, and destroy in fury, had then for their principal office to "water the garden" of God. The description is, however, sufficiently apposite and interesting, as bearing upon what I have noted respecting the eminent *fence*-loving spirit of the mediævals.

§ 18. Together with this peculiar formality, we find an infinite delight in drawing pleasant flowers, always articulating and outlining them completely; the sky is always blue, having only a few delicate white clouds in it, and in the distance are blue mountains, very far away, if the landscape is to be simply delightful; but brought near, and divided into quaint over-



7 Botany of 13th Century.
(Apple-tree and Cyclamen.)

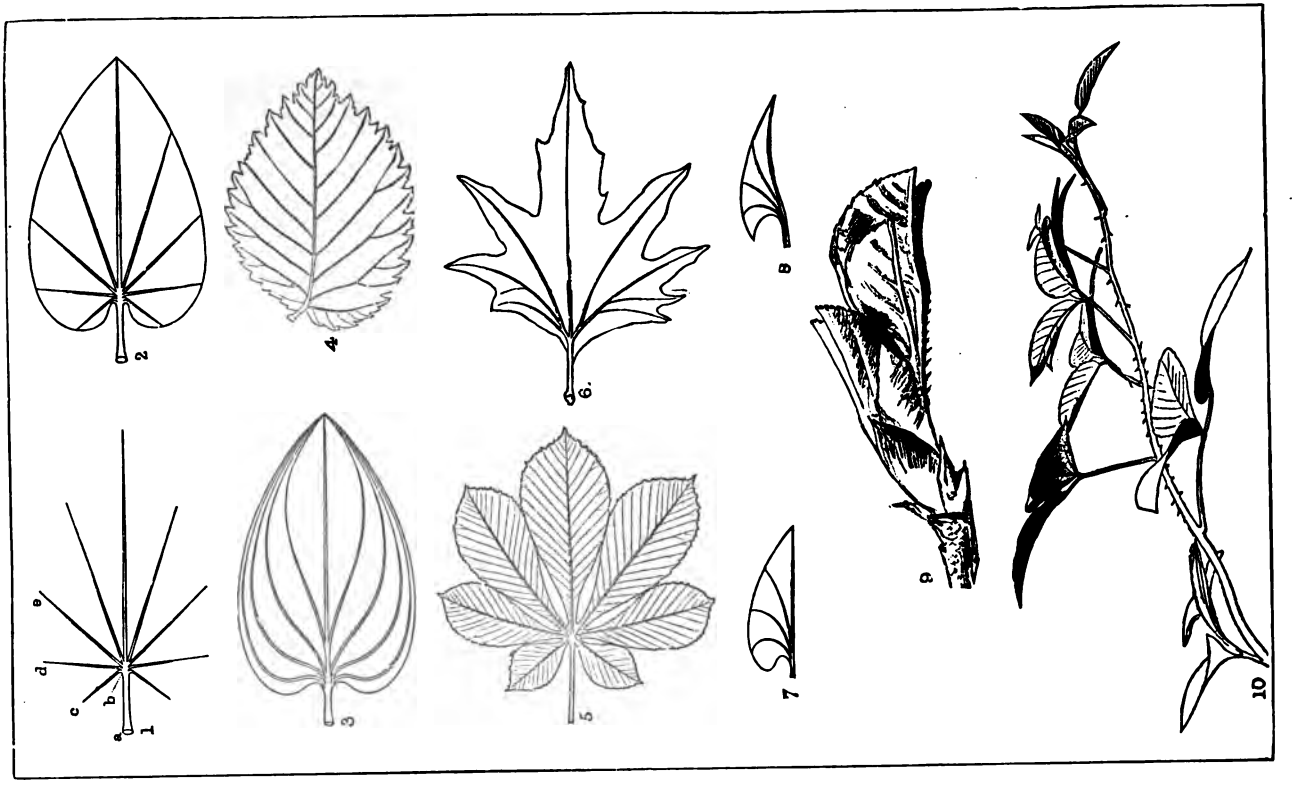
hanging rocks, if it is intended to be meditative, or a place of saintly seclusion. But the whole of it always,—flowers, castles, brooks, clouds, and rocks,—subordinate to the human figures in the foreground, and painted for no other end than that of explaining their adventures and occupations.

§ 19. Before the idea of landscape had been thus far developed, the representations of it had been purely typical; the objects which had to be shown in order to explain the scene of the event, being firmly outlined, usually on a pure golden or chequered color background, not on sky. The change from the golden background, (characteristic of the finest thirteenth century work) and the colored chequer (which in like manner belongs to the finest fourteenth) to the blue sky, gradated to the horizon, takes place early in the fifteenth century, and is the *crisis* of change in the spirit of mediæval art. Strictly speaking, we might divide the art of Christian times into two great masses—Symbolic and Imitative;—the symbolic, reaching from the earliest periods down to the close of the fourteenth century, and the imitative from that close to the present time; and, then, the most important circumstance indicative of the culminating point, or turn of tide, would be this of the change from chequered background to sky background. The uppermost figure in Plate 7. opposite, representing the tree of knowledge, taken from a somewhat late thirteenth century Hebrew manuscript (Additional 11,639) in the British Museum, will at once illustrate Mr. Macaulay's "serpent turned round the tree," and the mode of introducing the chequer background, will enable the reader better to understand the peculiar feeling of the period, which no more intended the formal walls or streams for an imitative representation of the Garden of Eden, than these chequers for an imitation of sky.

§ 20. The moment the sky is introduced (and it is curious how perfectly it is done *at once*, many manuscripts presenting, in alternate pages, chequered backgrounds, and deep blue skies exquisitely gradated to the horizon)—the moment, I say, the sky is introduced, the spirit of art becomes for evermore changed, and thenceforward it gradually proposes imitation more and more as an end, until it reaches the Turnerian landscape. This broad division into two schools would therefore be

the most true and accurate we could employ, but not the most convenient. For the great mediæval art lies in a cluster about the culminating point, including symbolism on one side, and imitation on the other, and extending like a radiant cloud upon the mountain peak of ages, partly down both sides of it, from the year 1200 to 1500; the brightest part of the cloud leaning a little backwards, and poising itself between 1250 and 1350. And therefore the most convenient arrangement is into Romanesque and barbaric art, up to 1200,—mediæval art, 1200 to 1500,—and modern art, from 1500 downwards. But it is only in the earlier or symbolic mediæval art, reaching up to the close of the fourteenth century, that the peculiar modification of natural forms for decorative purposes is seen in its perfection, with all its beauty, and all its necessary shortcomings; the minds of men being accurately balanced between that honor for the superior human form which they shared with the Greek ages, and the sentimental love of nature which was peculiar to their own. The expression of the two feelings will be found to vary according to the material and place of the art; in painting, the conventional forms are more adopted, in order to obtain definition, and brilliancy of color, while in sculpture the life of nature is often rendered with a love and faithfulness which put modern art to shame. And in this earnest contemplation of the natural facts, united with an endeavor to simplify, for clear expression, the results of that contemplation, the ornamental artists arrived at two abstract conclusions about form, which are highly curious and interesting.

§ 21. They saw, first, that a leaf might always be considered as a sudden expansion of the stem that bore it; an uncontrollable expression of delight, on the part of the twig, that spring had come, shown in a fountain-like expatiation of its tender green heart into the air. They saw that in this violent proclamation of its delight and liberty, whereas the twig had, until that moment, a disposition only to grow quietly forwards, it expressed its satisfaction and extreme pleasure in sunshine by springing out to right and left. Let *a b*, Fig. 1. Plate 8., be the twig growing forward in the direction from *a* to *b*. It reaches the point *b*, and then—spring coming,—not being able to contain itself, it bursts out in every direction, even springing



8. The Growth of Leaves.

backwards at first for joy; but as this backward direction is contrary to its own proper fate and nature, it cannot go on so long, and the length of each rib into which it separates is proportioned accurately to the degree in which the proceedings of that rib are in harmony with the natural destiny of the plant. Thus the rib *c*, entirely contradictory, by the direction of his life and energy, of the general intentions to the tree, is but a short-lived rib; *d*, not quite so opposite to his fate, lives longer; *e*, accommodating himself still more to the spirit of progress, attains a greater length still; and the largest rib of all is the one who has not yielded at all to the erratic disposition of the others when spring came, but, feeling quite as happy about the spring as they did, nevertheless took no holiday, minded his business, and grew straightforward.

§ 22. Fig. 6. in the same plate, which shows the disposition of the ribs in the leaf of an American Plane, exemplifies the principle very accurately; it is indeed more notably seen in this than in most leaves, because the ribs at the base have evidently had a little fraternal quarrel about their spring holiday; and the more gaily-minded ones, getting together into trios on each side, have rather pooh-poohed and laughed at the seventh brother in the middle, who wanted to go on regularly, and attend to his work. Nevertheless, though thus starting quite by himself in life, this seventh brother, quietly pushing on in the right direction, lives longest, and makes the largest fortune, and the triple partnerships on the right and left meet with a very minor prosperity.

§ 23. Now if we inclose Fig. 1. in Plate 8. with two curves passing through the extremities of the ribs, we get Fig. 2., the central type of all leaves. Only this type is modified of course in a thousand ways by the life of the plant. If it be marsh or aquatic, instead of springing out in twigs, it is almost certain to expand in soft currents, as the liberated stream does at its mouth into the ocean, Fig. 3. (Alisma Plantago); if it be meant for one of the crowned and lovely trees of the earth, it will separate into stars, and each ray of the leaf will form a ray of light in the crown, Fig. 5. (Horsechestnut); and if it be a common-place tree, rather prudent and practical than imaginative, it will not expand all at once, but throw out the ribs every now

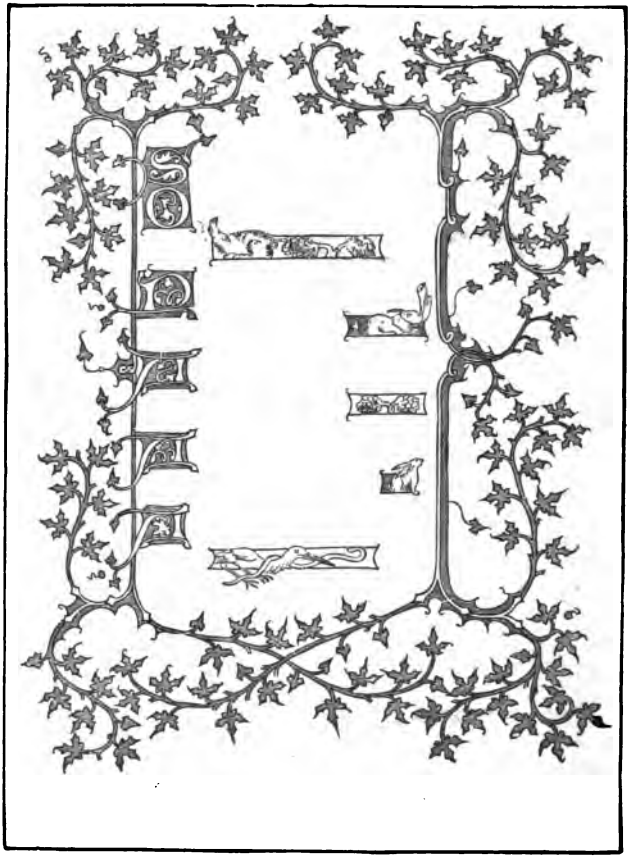
and then along the central rib, like a merchant taking his occasional and restricted holiday, Fig. 4. (Elm).

§ 24. Now in the bud, where all these proceedings on the leaf's part are first imagined, the young leaf is generally (always?) doubled up in embryo, so as to present the profile of the half-leaves, as Fig. 7., only in exquisite complexity of arrangement; Fig. 9., for instance, is the profile of the leaf-bud of a rose. Hence the general arrangement of line represented by Fig. 8. (in which the lower line is slightly curved to express the bending life in the spine) is everlastingly typical of the expanding powers of joyful vegetative youth; and it is of all simple forms the most exquisitely delightful to the human mind. It presents itself in a thousand different proportions and

FIG. 8.

variations in the buds and profiles of leaves; those being always the loveliest in which, either by accidental perspective of position, or inherent character in the tree, it is most frequently presented to the eye. The branch of bramble, for instance, Fig. 10. at the bottom of Plate 8., owes its chief beauty to the perpetual recurrence of this typical form; and we shall find presently the enormous importance of it, even in mountain ranges, though, in these, *falling* force takes the place of *vital* force.

§ 25. This abstract conclusion the great thirteenth century artists were the first to arrive at; and whereas, before their time, ornament had been constantly refined into intricate and



Botany of the 14th Century.
From the Prayer-book of Yolande of Navarre.

subdivided symmetries, they were content with this simple form as the termination of its most important features. Fig. 3., which is a scroll out of a Psalter executed in the latter half of the thirteenth century, is a sufficient example of a practice at that time absolutely universal.

§ 26. The second great discovery of the Middle Ages in floral ornament, was that, in order completely to express the law of subordination among the leaf-ribs, two ribs were necessary, *and no more*, on each side of the leaf, forming a series of three with the central one, because proportion is between three terms at least.

That is to say, when they had only three ribs altogether, as *a*, Fig. 4., no *law* of relation was discernible between the ribs,

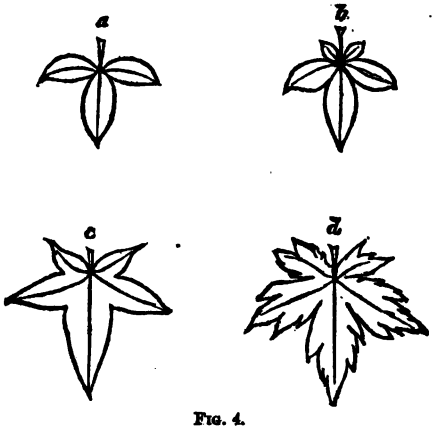


FIG. 4.

or the leaflets they bore; but by the addition of a third on each side, as at *b*, proportion instantly was expressible, whether arithmetical or geometrical, or of any other kind. Hence the adoption of forms more or less approximating to that at *c* (young ivy), or *d* (wild geranium), as the favorite elements of their floral ornament, those leaves being in their disposition of masses, the simplest which can express a perfect law of proportion, just as the outline Fig. 7. Plate 8. is the simplest which can express a perfect law of growth.

Plate 9. opposite gives, in rude outline, the arrangement of

the border of one of the pages of a missal in my own possession, executed for the Countess Yolande of Flanders,* in the latter half of the fourteenth century, and furnishing, in exhaustless variety, the most graceful examples I have ever seen of the favorite decoration at the period, commonly now known as the "Ivy leaf" pattern.

§ 27. In thus reducing these two everlasting laws of beauty to their simplest possible exponents, the mediæval workmen were the first to discern and establish the principles of decorative art to the end of time, nor of decorative art merely, but of mass arrangement in general. For the members of any great composition, arranged about a centre, are always reducible to the law of the ivy leaf, the best cathedral entrances having five porches corresponding in proportional purpose to its five lobes (three being an imperfect, and seven a superfluous number); while the loveliest groups of lines attainable in any pictorial composition are always based on the section of the leaf-bud, Fig. 7. Plate 8., or on the relation of its ribs to the convex curve enclosing them.

§ 28. These discoveries of ultimate truth are, I believe, never made philosophically, but instinctively; so that wherever we find a high abstract result of the kind, we may be almost sure it has been the work of the penetrative imagination, acting under the influence of strong affection. Accordingly, when we enter on our botanical inquiries, I shall have occasion to show with what tender and loving fidelity to nature the masters of the thirteenth century always traced the leading lines of their decorations, either in missal-painting or sculpture, and how totally in this respect their methods of subduing, for the sake of distinctness, the natural forms they loved so dearly, differ from the iron formalisms to which the Greeks, careless of all that was not completely divine or completely human, reduced the thorn of the acanthus, and softness of the lily. Nevertheless, in all this perfect and loving decorative art, we have hardly any careful references to other landscape features than herbs and flowers; mountains, water, and clouds are introduced so rudely, that the representations of them can never be received for any-

* Married to Philip, younger son of the King of Navarre, in 1352. She died in 1394.

thing else than letters or signs. Thus the *sign* of clouds, in the thirteenth century, is an undulating band, usually in painting, of blue edged with white, in sculpture, wrought so as to resemble very nearly the folds of a curtain closely tied, and understood for clouds only by its position, as surrounding angels or saints in heaven, opening to souls ascending at the Last Judgment, or forming canopies over the Saviour or the Virgin. Water is represented by zigzag lines, nearly resembling those employed for clouds, but distinguished, in sculpture, by having fish in it; in painting, both by fish and a more continuous blue or green color. And when these unvaried symbols are associated under the influence of that love of firm fence, moat, and every other means of definition which we have seen to be one of the prevailing characteristics of the mediæval mind, it is not possible for us to conceive, through the rigidity of the signs employed, what were the real feelings of the workman or spectator about the natural landscape. We see that the thing carved or painted is not intended in any wise to imitate the truth, or convey to us the feelings which the workman had in contemplating the truth. He has got a way of talking about it so definite and cold, and tells us with his chisel so calmly that the knight had a castle to attack, or the saint a river to cross dryshod, without making the smallest effort to describe pictorially either castle or river, that we are left wholly at fault as to the nature of the emotion with which he contemplated the real objects. But that emotion, as the intermediate step between the feelings of the Grecian and the Modern, it must be our aim to ascertain as clearly as possible; and, therefore, finding it not at this period completely expressed in visible art, we must, as we did with the Greeks, take up the written landscape instead, and examine this mediæval sentiment as we find it embodied in the poem of Dante.

§ 29. The thing that must first strike us in this respect, as we turn our thoughts to the poem, is, unquestionably, the *formality* of its landscape.

Milton's effort, in all that he tells us of his Inferno, is to make it indefinite; Dante's, to make it *definite*. Both, indeed, describe it as entered through gates; but, within the gate, all is wild and fenceless with Milton, having indeed its four rivers,

—the last vestige of the mediæval tradition,—but rivers which flow through a waste of mountain and moorland, and by "many a frozen, many a fiery Alp." But Dante's Inferno is accurately separated into circles drawn with well-pointed compasses; mapped and properly surveyed in every direction, trenched in a thoroughly good style of engineering from depth to depth, and divided in the "*accurate* middle" (dritto mezzo) of its deepest abyss, into a concentric series of ten moats and embankments, like those about a castle, with bridges from each embankment to the next; precisely in the manner of those bridges over Hiddekel and Euphrates, which Mr. Macaulay thinks so innocently designed, apparently not aware that he is also laughing at Dante. These larger fosses are of rock, and the bridges also; but as he goes further into detail, Dante tells us of various minor fosses and embankments, in which he anxiously points out to us not only the formality, but the neatness and perfectness, of the stonework. For instance, in describing the river Phlegethon, he tells us that it was "paved with stone at the bottom, and at the sides, and *over the edges of the sides*," just as the water is at the baths of Bulicame; and for fear we should think this embankment at all *larger* than it really was, Dante adds, carefully, that it was made just like the embankments of Ghent or Bruges against the sea, or those in Lombardy which bank the Brenta, only "not so high, nor so wide," as any of these. And besides the trenches, we have two well-built castles; one like Ecbatana, with seven circuits of wall (and surrounded by a fair stream), wherein the great poets and sages of antiquity live; and another, a great fortified city with walls of iron, red-hot, and a deep fosse round it, and full of "grave citizens,"—the city of Dis.

§ 30. Now, whether this be in what we moderns call "good taste," or not, I do not mean just now to inquire—Dante having nothing to do with taste, but with the facts of what he had seen; only, so far as the imaginative faculty of the two poets is concerned, note that Milton's vagueness is not the sign of imagination, but of its absence, so far as it is significative in the matter. For it does not follow, because Milton did not map out his Inferno as Dante did, that he *could* not have done so if he had chosen; only, it was the easier and less imaginative process to

leave it vague than to define it. Imagination is always the seeing and asserting faculty; that which obscures or conceals may be judgment, or feeling, but not invention. The invention, whether good or bad, is in the accurate engineering, not in the fog and uncertainty.

§ 31. When we pass with Dante from the Inferno to Purgatory, we have indeed more light and air, but no more liberty; being now confined on various ledges cut into a mountain side, with a precipice on one hand and a vertical wall on the other; and, lest here also we should make any mistake about magnitudes, we are told that the ledges were eighteen feet wide,* and that the ascent from one to the other was by steps, made like those which go up from Florence to the church of San Minieto.†

Lastly, though in the Paradise there is perfect freedom and infinity of space, though for trenches we have planets, and for cornices constellations, yet there is more cadence, procession, and order among the redeemed souls than any others; they fly, so as to describe letters and sentences in the air, and rest in circles, like rainbows, or determinate figures, as of a cross and an eagle; in which certain of the more glorified natures are so arranged as to form the eye of the bird, while those most highly blessed are arranged with their white crowds in leaflets, so as to form the image of a white rose in the midst of heaven.

§ 32. Thus, throughout the poem, I conceive that the first striking character of its scenery is intense definition; precisely the reflection of that definiteness which we have already traced in pictorial art. But the second point which seems noteworthy is, that the flat ground and embanked trenches are reserved for the Inferno; and that the entire territory of the Purgatory is a mountain, thus marking the sense of that purifying and perfecting influence in mountains which we saw the mediæval mind was so ready to suggest. The same general idea is indicated at the very commencement of the poem, in which Dante is overwhelmed by fear and sorrow in passing through a dark forest, but revives on seeing the sun touch the top of a hill, afterwards called by Virgil "the pleasant mount—the cause and source of all delight."

* "Three times the length of a human body."—Purg. x. 24.

† Purg. xii. 102.

§ 33. While, however, we find this greater honor paid to mountains, I think we may perceive a much greater dread and dislike of woods. We saw that Homer seemed to attach a pleasant idea, for the most part, to forests; regarding them as sources of wealth and places of shelter; and we find constantly an idea of sacredness attached to them, as being haunted especially by the gods; so that even the wood which surrounds the house of Circe is spoken of as a sacred thicket, or rather, as a sacred glade, or labyrinth of glades (of the particular word used I shall have more to say presently); and so the wood is sought as a kindly shelter by Ulysses, in spite of its wild beasts; and evidently regarded with great affection by Sophocles, for, in a passage which is always regarded by readers of Greek tragedy with peculiar pleasure, the aged and blind Œdipus, brought to rest in "the sweetest resting-place" in all the neighborhood of Athens, has the spot described to him as haunted perpetually by nightingales, which sing "in the green glades and in the dark ivy, and in the thousand-fruited, sunless, and windless thickets of the god" (Bacchus); the idea of the complete shelter from wind and sun being here, as with Ulysses, the uppermost one. After this come the usual staples of landscape,—narcissus, crocus, plenty of rain, olive trees; and last, and the greatest boast of all,—"it is a good country for horses, and conveniently by the sea;" but the prominence and pleasantness of the thick wood in the thoughts of the writer are very notable; whereas to Dante the idea of a forest is exceedingly repulsive, so that, as just noticed, in the opening of his poem, he cannot express a general despair about life more strongly than by saying he was lost in a wood so savage and terrible, that "even to think or speak of it is distress,—it was so bitter,—it was something next door to death;" and one of the saddest scenes in all the Inferno is in a forest, of which the trees are haunted by lost souls; while (with only one exception,) whenever the country is to be beautiful, we find ourselves coming out into open air and open meadows.

It is quite true that this is partly a characteristic, not merely of Dante, or of mediæval writers, but of *southern* writers; for the simple reason that the forest, being with them higher upon the hills, and more out of the way than in the north was generally a type of lonely and savage places; while in England,

the "greenwood," coming up to the very walls of the towns, it was possible to be "merry in the good greenwood," in a sense which an Italian could not have understood. Hence Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakspere send their favorites perpetually to the woods for pleasure or meditation; and trust their tender Canace, or Rosalind, or Helena, or Silvia, or Belphœbe, where Dante would have sent no one but a condemned spirit. Nevertheless, there is always traceable in the mediæval mind a dread of thick foliage, which was not present to that of a Greek; so that, even in the north, we have our sorrowful "children in the wood," and black huntsmen of the Hartz forests, and such other wood terrors; the principal reason for the difference being that a Greek, being by no means given to travelling, regarded his woods as so much valuable property; and if he ever went into them for pleasure expected to meet one or two gods in the course of his walk, but no banditti; while a mediæval, much more of a solitary traveller, and expecting to meet with no gods in the thickets, but only with thieves, or a hostile ambush, or a bear, besides a great deal of troublesome ground for his horse, and a very serious chance, next to a certainty, of losing his way, naturally kept in the open ground as long as he could, and regarded the forests, in general, with anything but an eye of favor.

§ 34. These, I think, are the principal points which must strike us, when we first broadly think of the poem as compared with classical work. Let us now go a little more into detail.

As Homer gave us an ideal landscape, which even a god might have been pleased to behold, so Dante gives us, fortunately, an ideal landscape, which is specially intended for the terrestrial paradise. And it will doubtless be with some surprise, after our reflections above on the general tone of Dante's feelings, that we find ourselves here first entering a *forest*, and that even a *thick* forest. But there is a peculiar meaning in this. With any other poet than Dante, it might have been regarded as a wanton inconsistency. Not so with him: by glancing back to the two lines which explain the nature of Paradise, we shall see what he means by it. Virgil tells him, as he enters it, "Henceforward, take thine own pleasure for guide; thou art beyond the steep ways, and beyond all Art;"—meaning, that the perfectly purified and noble human creature, having no

pleasure but in right, is past all effort, and past all *rule*. Art has no existence for such a being. Hence, the first aim of Dante, in his landscape imagery, is to show evidence of this perfect liberty, and of the purity and sinlessness of the new nature, converting pathless ways into happy ones. So that all those fences and formalisms which had been needed for him in imperfection, are removed in this paradise; and even the pathlessness of the wood, the most dreadful thing possible to him in his days of sin and shortcoming, is now a joy to him in his days of purity. And as the fencelessness and thicket of sin led to the fettered and fearful order of eternal punishment, so the fencelessness and thicket of the free virtue lead to the loving and constellated order of eternal happiness.

§ 35. This forest, then, is very like that of Colonos in several respects—in its peace and sweetness, and number of birds; it differs from it only in letting a light breeze through it, being therefore somewhat thinner than the Greek wood; the tender lines which tell of the voices of the birds mingling with the wind, and of the leaves all turning one way before it, have been more or less copied by every poet since Dante's time. They are, so far as I know, the sweetest passage of wood description which exists in literature.

Before, however, Dante has gone far in this wood,—that is to say, only so far as to have lost sight of the place where he entered it, or rather, I suppose, of the light under the boughs of the outside trees, and it must have been a very thin wood indeed if he did not do this in some quarter of a mile's walk,—he comes to a little river, three paces over, which bends the blades of grass to the left, with a meadow on the other side of it; and in this meadow

> "A lady, graced with solitude, who went
> Singing, and setting flower by flower apart,
> By which the path she walked on was besprent.
> 'Ah, lady beautiful, that basking art
> In beams of love, if I may trust thy face,
> Which useth to bear witness of the heart,
> Let liking come on thee,' said I, 'to trace
> Thy path a little closer to the shore,
> Where I may reap the hearing of thy lays.
> Thou mindest me, how Proserpine of yore

Appeared in such a place, what time her mother
Lost her, and she the spring, for evermore.'
As, pointing downwards and to one another
Her feet, a lady bendeth in the dance,
And barely setteth one before the other,
Thus, on the scarlet and the saffron glance
Of flowers, with motion maidenlike she bent
(Her modest eyelids drooping and askance);
And there she gave my wishes their content,
Approaching, so that her sweet melodies
Arrived upon mine ear with what they meant.
When first she came amongst the blades, that rise,
Already wetted, from the goodly river,
She graced me by the lifting of her eyes." (CAYLEY.)

§ 36. I have given this passage at length, because, for our purposes, it is by much the most important, not only in Dante, but in the whole circle of poetry. This lady, observe, stands on the opposite side of the little stream, which, presently, she explains to Dante is Lethe, having power to cause forgetfulness of all evil, and she stands just among the bent blades of grass at its edge. She is first seen gathering flower from flower, then "passing continually the multitudinous flowers through her hands," smiling at the same time so brightly, that her first address to Dante is to prevent him from wondering at her, saying, "if he will remember the verse of the ninety-second Psalm, beginning 'Delectasti,' he will know why she is so happy."

And turning to the verse of the Psalm, we find it written, "Thou, Lord, hast made me glad *through Thy works.* I will triumph *in the works of Thy hands;*" or, in the very words in which Dante would read it,—

"Quia delectasti me, Domine, in factura tua,
Et in operibus manuum Tuarum exultabo."

§ 37. Now we could not for an instant have had any difficulty in understanding this, but that, some way farther on in the poem, this lady is called Matilda, and it is with reason supposed by the commentators to be the great Countess Matilda of the eleventh century; notable equally for her ceaseless activity, her brilliant political genius, her perfect piety, and her deep reverence for the see of Rome. This Countess Matilda is therefore Dante's guide

in the terrestrial paradise, as Beatrice is afterwards in the celestial; each of them having a spiritual and symbolic character in their glorified state, yet retaining their definite personality.

The question is, then, what is the symbolic character of the Countess Matilda, as the guiding spirit of the terrestrial paradise? Before Dante had entered this paradise he had rested on a step of shelving rock, and as he watched the stars he slept, and dreamed, and thus tells us what he saw:—

> "A lady, young and beautiful, I dreamed,
> Was passing o'er a lea; and, as she came,
> Methought I saw her ever and anon
> Bending to cull the flowers; and thus she sang:
> 'Know ye, whoever of my name would ask,
> That I am Leah; for my brow to weave
> A garland, these fair hands unwearied ply;
> To please me at the crystal mirror, here
> I deck me. But my sister Rachel, she
> Before her glass abides the livelong day,
> Her radiant eyes beholding, charmed no less
> Than I with this delightful task. Her joy
> In contemplation, as in labor mine.'"

This vision of Rachel and Leah has been always, and with unquestionable truth, received as a type of the Active and Contemplative life, and as an introduction to the two divisions of the paradise which Dante is about to enter. Therefore the unwearied spirit of the Countess Matilda is understood to represent the Active life, which forms the felicity of Earth; and the spirit of Beatrice the Contemplative life, which forms the felicity of Heaven. This interpretation appears at first straightforward and certain; but it has missed count of exactly the most important fact in the two passages which we have to explain. Observe: Leah gathers the flowers to decorate *herself*, and delights in *Her Own* Labor. Rachel sits silent, contemplating herself, and delights in *Her Own* Image. These are the types of the Unglorified Active and Contemplative powers of Man. But Beatrice and Matilda are the same powers, Glorified. And how are they Glorified? Leah took delight in her own labor; but Matilda—"in operibus *manuum Tuarum*"—*in God's labor:* Rachel in the sight of her own face; Beatrice in the sight of *God's face.*

§ 38. And thus, when afterwards Dante sees Beatrice on her throne, and prays her that, when he himself shall die, she would receive him with kindness, Beatrice merely looks down for an instant, and answers with a single smile, then "towards the eternal fountain turns."

Therefore it is evident that Dante distinguishes in both cases, not between earth and heaven, but between perfect and imperfect happiness, whether in earth or heaven. The active life which has only the service of man for its end, and therefore gathers flowers, with Leah, for its own decoration, is indeed happy, but not perfectly so; it has only the happiness of the dream, belonging essentially to the dream of human life, and passing away with it. But the active life which labors for the more and more discovery of God's work, is perfectly happy, and is the life of the terrestrial paradise, being a true foretaste of heaven, and beginning in earth, as heaven's vestibule. So also the contemplative life which is concerned with human feeling and thought and beauty—the life which is in earthly poetry and imagery of noble earthly emotion—is happy, but it is the happiness of the dream; the contemplative life which has God's person and love in Christ for its object, has the happiness of eternity. But because this higher happiness is also begun here on earth, Beatrice descends to earth; and when revealed to Dante first, he sees the image of the twofold personality of Christ reflected in her *eyes;* as the flowers, which are, to the mediæval heart, the chief work of God, are for ever passing through Matilda's *hands.*

§ 39. Now, therefore, we see that Dante, as the great prophetic exponent of the heart of the Middle Ages, has, by the lips of the spirit of Matilda, declared the mediæval faith,—that all perfect active life was "the expression of man's delight *in God's work;*" and that all their political and warlike energy, as fully shown in the mortal life of Matilda, was yet inferior and impure,—the energy of the dream,—compared with that which on the opposite bank of Lethe stood "choosing flower from flower." And what joy and peace there were in this work is marked by Matilda's being the person who draws Dante through the stream of Lethe, so as to make him forget all sin, and all sorrow: throwing her arms round him, she plunges his head

under the waves of it; then draws him through, crying to him, "*hold me, hold me*" (tiemmi, tiemmi), and so presents him, thus bathed, free from all painful memory, at the feet of the spirit of the more heavenly contemplation.

§ 40. The reader will, I think, now see, with sufficient distinctness, why I called this passage the most important, for our present purposes, in the whole circle of poetry. For it contains the first great confession of the discovery by the human race (I mean as a matter of experience, not of revelation), that their happiness was not in themselves, and that their labor was not to have their own service as its chief end. It embodies in a few syllables the *sealing* difference between the Greek and the mediæval, in that the former sought the flower and herb for his own uses, the latter for God's honor; the former, primarily and on principle, contemplated his own beauty and the workings of his own mind, and the latter, primarily and on principle, contemplated Christ's beauty and the workings of the mind of Christ.

§ 41. I will not at present follow up this subject any farther; it being enough that we have thus got to the root of it, and have a great declaration of the central mediæval purpose, whereto we may return for solution of all future questions. I would only, therefore, desire the reader now to compare the Stones of Venice, vol. i. chap. xx. §§ 15. 16.; the Seven Lamps of Architecture, chap. iv. § 3.; and the second volume of this work, Chap. II. §§ 9. 10., and Chap. III. § 10.; that he may, in these several places, observe how gradually our conclusions are knitting themselves together as we are able to determine more and more of the successive questions that come before us: and, finally, to compare the two interesting passages in Wordsworth, which, without any memory of Dante, nevertheless, as if by some special ordaining, describe in matters of modern life exactly the soothing or felicitous powers of the two active spirits of Dante—Leah and Matilda, Excursion, book v. line 608. to 625., and book vi. line 102. to 214.

§ 42. Having thus received from Dante this great lesson, as to the spirit in which mediæval landscape is to be understood, what else we have to note respecting it, as seen in his poem, will be comparatively straightforward and easy. And first, we have to observe the place occupied in his mind by *color*. It has

already been shown, in the Stones of Venice, vol. ii. chap. v. §§ 30—34., that color is the most *sacred* element of all visible things. Hence, as the mediæval mind contemplated them first for their sacredness, we should, beforehand, expect that the first thing it would seize would be the color; and that we should find its expressions and renderings of color infinitely more loving and accurate than among the Greeks.

§ 43. Accordingly, the Greek sense of color seems to have been so comparatively dim and uncertain, that it is almost impossible to ascertain what the real idea was which they attached to any word alluding to hue: and above all, color, though pleasant to their eyes, as to those of all human beings, seems never to have been impressive to their feelings. They liked purple, on the whole, the best; but there was no sense of cheerfulness or pleasantness in one color, and gloom in another, such as the mediævals had.

For instance, when Achilles goes, in great anger and sorrow, to complain to Thetis of the scorn done him by Agamemnon, the sea appears to him "wine-colored." One might think this meant that the sea looked dark and reddish-purple to him, in a kind of sympathy with his anger. But we turn to the passage of Sophocles, which has been above quoted—a passage peculiarly intended to express peace and rest—and we find that the birds sing among "wine-colored" ivy. The uncertainty of conception of the hue itself, and entire absence of expressive character in the word, could hardly be more clearly manifested.

§ 44. Again: I said the Greek liked purple, as a general source of enjoyment, better than any other color. So he did, and so all healthy persons who have eye for color, and are unprejudiced about it, do; and will to the end of time, for a reason presently to be noted. But so far was this instinctive preference for purple from giving, in the Greek mind, any consistently cheerful or sacred association to the color, that Homer constantly calls death "purple death."

§ 45. Again: in the passage of Sophocles, so often spoken of, I said there was some difficulty respecting a word often translated "thickets." I believe, myself, it means glades; literally, "going places" in the woods,—that is to say, places where, either naturally or by force, the trees separate, so as to

give some accessible avenue. Now, Sophocles tells us the birds sang in these "*green* going places;" and we take up the expression gratefully, thinking the old Greek perceived and enjoyed, as we do, the sweet fall of the eminently *green* light through the leaves when they are a little thinner than in the heart of the wood. But we turn to the tragedy of Ajax, and are much shaken in our conclusion about the meaning of the word, when we are told that the body of Ajax is to lie unburied, and be eaten by sea-birds on the "*green* sand." The formation, geologically distinguished by that title, was certainly not known to Sophocles; and the only conclusion which, it seems to me, we can come to under the circumstances,—assuming Ariel's * authority as to the color of pretty sand, and the ancient mariner's (or, rather, his hearer's †) as to the color of ugly sand, to be conclusive,—is that Sophocles really did not know green from yellow or brown.

§ 46. Now, without going out of the terrestrial paradise, in which Dante last left us, we shall be able at once to compare with this Greek incertitude the precision of the mediæval eye for color. Some three arrowflights further up into the wood we come to a tall tree, which is at first barren, but, after some little time, visibly opens into flowers, of a color "less than that of roses, but more than that of violets."

It certainly would not be possible, in words, to come nearer to the *definition* of the exact hue which Dante meant—that of the apple-blossom. Had he employed any simple color-phrase, as a "pale pink," or "violet-pink," or any other such combined expression, he still could not have completely got at the delicacy of the hue; he might perhaps have indicated its kind, but not its tenderness; but by taking the rose-leaf as the type of the delicate red, and then enfeebling this with the violet grey, he gets, as closely as language can carry him, to the complete rendering of the vision, though it is evidently felt by him to be in its perfect beauty ineffable; and rightly so felt, for of all lovely things which grace the spring time in our fair temperate

* "Come unto these *yellow* sands."

† "And thou art long, and lank, and *brown*,
As is the ribbed sea sand."

zone, I am not sure but this blossoming of the apple-tree is the fairest. At all events, I find it associated in my mind with four other kinds of color, certainly principal among the gifts of the northern earth, namely:

1st. Bell gentians growing close together, mixed with lilies of the valley, on the Jura pastures.
2nd. Alpine roses with dew upon them, under low rays of morning sunshine, touching the tops of the flowers.
3rd. Bell heather in mass, in full light, at sunset.
4th. White narcissus (red-centred) in mass, on the Vevay pastures, in sunshine, after rain.

And I know not where in the group to place the wreaths of apple-blossoms, in the Vevay orchards, with the far-off blue of the lake of Geneva seen between the flowers.

A Greek, however, would have regarded this blossom simply with the eyes of a Devonshire farmer, as bearing on the probable price of cider, and would have called it red, cerulean, purple, white, hyacinthine, or generally "aglaos," agreeable, as happened to suit his verse.

§ 47. Again: we have seen how fond the Greek was of composing his paradises of rather damp grass; but that in this fondness for grass there was always an undercurrent of consideration for his horses; and the characters in it which pleased him most were its depth and freshness; not its color. Now, if we remember carefully the general expressions, respecting grass, used in modern literature, I think nearly the commonest that occurs to us will be that of "enamelled" turf or sward. This phrase is usually employed by our pseudo-poets, like all their other phrases, without knowing what it means, because it has been used by other writers before them, and because they do not know what else to say of grass. If we were to ask them what enamel was, they could not tell us; and if we asked why grass was like enamel, they could not tell us. The expression *has* a meaning, however, and one peculiarly characteristic of mediæval and modern temper.

§ 48. The first instance I know of its right use, though very probably it had been so employed before, is in Dante. The righteous spirits of the pre-Christian ages are seen by him, though

in the Inferno, yet in a place open, luminous, and high, walking upon the "green enamel."

I am very sure that Dante did not use this phrase as we use it. He knew well what enamel was; and his readers, in order to understand him thoroughly, must remember what it is,—a vitreous paste, dissolved in water, mixed with metallic oxides, to give it the opacity and the color required, spread in a moist state on metal, and afterwards hardened by fire, so as never to change. And Dante means, in using this metaphor of the grass of the Inferno, to mark that it is laid as a tempering and cooling substance over the dark, metallic, gloomy ground; but yet so hardened by the fire, that it is not any more fresh or living grass, but a smooth, silent, lifeless bed of eternal green. And we know how *hard* Dante's idea of it was; because afterwards, in what is perhaps the most awful passage of the whole Inferno, when the three furies rise at the top of the burning tower, and catching sight of Dante, and not being able to get at him, shriek wildly for the Gorgon to come up too, that they may turn him into stone,—the word *stone* is not hard enough for them. Stone might crumble away after it was made, or something with life might grow upon it; no, it shall not be stone; they will make enamel of him; nothing can grow out of that; it is dead for ever.*

"Venga Medusa, si lo farem di *Smalto*."

§ 49. Now, almost in the opening of the Purgatory, as there at the entrance of the Inferno, we find a company of great ones resting in a grassy place. But the idea of the grass now is very different. The word now used is not "enamel," but "herb," and instead of being merely green, it is covered with flowers of many colors. With the usual mediæval accuracy, Dante insists on telling us precisely what these colors were, and how bright; which he does by naming the actual pigments used in illumination,—"Gold, and fine silver, and cochineal, and white lead, and Indian wood, serene and lucid, and fresh emerald, just broken, would have been excelled, as less is by greater, by the flowers and grass of the place." It is evident that the "emerald" here means the emerald green of the illuminators; for

* Compare parallel passage, making Dante hard or changeless in good, Purg. viii. 114.

a fresh emerald is no brighter than one which is not fresh, and Dante was not one to throw away his words thus. Observe, then, we have here the idea of the growth, life, and variegation of the "green herb," as opposed to the smalto of the Inferno; but the colors of the variegation are illustrated and defined by the reference to actual pigments; and, observe, because the other colors are rather bright, the blue ground (Indian wood, indigo?) is sober; lucid, but serene; and presently two angels enter, who are dressed in green drapery, but of a paler green than the grass, which Dante marks, by telling us that it was "the green of leaves just budded."

§ 50. In all this, I wish the reader to observe two things: first, the general carefulness of the poet in defining color, distinguishing it precisely as a painter would (opposed to the Greek carelessness about it); and, secondly, his regarding the grass for its greenness and variegation, rather than, as a Greek would have done, for its depth and freshness. This greenness or brightness, and variegation, are taken up by later and modern poets, as the things intended to be chiefly expressed by the word "enamelled;" and, gradually, the term is taken to indicate any kind of bright and interchangeable coloring; there being always this much of propriety about it, when used of greensward, that such sward is indeed, like enamel, a coat of bright color on a comparatively dark ground; and is thus a sort of natural jewelry and painter's work, different from loose and large vegetation. The word is often awkwardly and falsely used, by the later poets, of all kinds of growth and color; as by Milton of the flowers of Paradise showing themselves over its wall; but it retains, nevertheless, through all its jaded inanity, some half-unconscious vestige of the old sense, even to the present day.

§ 51. There are, it seems to me, several important deductions to be made from these facts. The Greek, we have seen, delighted in the grass for its usefulness; the mediæval, as also we moderns, for its color and beauty. But both dwell on it as the *first* element of the lovely landscape; we saw its use in Homer, we see also that Dante thinks the righteous spirits of the heathen enough comforted in Hades by having even the *image* of green grass put beneath their feet; the happy resting-place in Purgatory has no other delight than its grass and flowers; and,

finally, in the terrestrial paradise, the feet of Matilda pause where the Lethe stream first bends the blades of grass. Consider a little what a depth there is in this great instinct of the human race. Gather a single blade of grass, and examine for a minute, quietly, its narrow sword-shaped strip of fluted green. Nothing, as it seems there, of notable goodness or beauty. A very little strength, and a very little tallness, and a few delicate long lines meeting in a point,—not a perfect point neither, but blunt and unfinished, by no means a creditable or apparently much cared for example of Nature's workmanship; made, as it seems, only to be trodden on to-day, and to-morrow to be cast into the oven; and a little pale and hollow stalk, feeble and flaccid, leading down to the dull brown fibres of roots. And yet, think of it well, and judge whether of all the gorgeous flowers that beam in summer air, and of all strong and goodly trees, pleasant to the eyes and good for food,—stately palm and pine, strong ash and oak, scented citron, burdened vine,—there be any by man so deeply loved, by God so highly graced, as that narrow point of feeble green. It seems to me not to have been without a peculiar significance, that our Lord, when about to work the miracle which, of all that He showed, appears to have been felt by the multitude as the most impressive,—the miracle of the loaves,—commanded the people to sit down by companies "upon the green grass." He was about to feed them with the principal produce of earth and the sea, the simplest representations of the food of mankind. He gave them the *seed* of the herb; He bade them sit down upon the herb itself, which was as great a gift, in its fitness for their joy and rest, as its perfect fruit, for their sustenance; thus, in this single order and act, when rightly understood, indicating for evermore how the Creator had entrusted the comfort, consolation, and sustenance of man, to the simplest and most despised of all the leafy families of the earth. And well does it fulfil its mission. Consider what we owe merely to the meadow grass, to the covering of the dark ground by that glorious enamel, by the companies of those soft, and countless, and peaceful spears. The fields! Follow but forth for a little time the thoughts of all that we ought to recognise in those words. All spring and summer is in them,—the walks by silent, scented paths,—the rests in noon

day heat,—the joy of herds and flocks,—the power of all shepherd life and meditation,—the life of sunlight upon the world, falling in emerald streaks, and falling in soft blue shadows, where else it would have struck upon the dark mould, or scorching dust,—pastures beside the pacing brooks,—soft banks and knolls of lowly hills,—thymy slopes of down overlooked by the blue line of lifted sea,—crisp lawns all dim with early dew, or smooth in evening warmth of barred sunshine, dinted by happy feet, and softening in their fall the sound of loving voices : all these are summed in those simple words ; and these are not all. We may not measure to the full the depth of this heavenly gift, in our own land ; though still, as we think of it longer, the infinite of that meadow sweetness, Shakspere's peculiar joy, would open on us more and more, yet we have it but in part. Go out, in the spring time, among the meadows that slope from the shores of the Swiss lakes to the roots of their lower mountains. There, mingled with the taller gentians and the white narcissus, the grass grows deep and free ; and as you follow the winding mountain paths, beneath arching boughs all veiled and dim with blossom,—paths that for ever droop and rise over the green banks and mounds sweeping down in scented undulation, steep to the blue water, studded here and there with new mown heaps, filling all the air with fainter sweetness,—look up towards the higher hills, where the waves of everlasting green roll silently into their long inlets among the shadows of the pines ; and we may, perhaps, at last know the meaning of those quiet words of the 147th Psalm, "He maketh grass to grow upon the mountains."

§ 52. There are also several lessons symbolically connected with this subject, which we must not allow to escape us. Observe, the peculiar characters of the grass, which adapt it especially for the service of man, are its apparent *humility*, and *cheerfulness*. Its humility, in that it seems created only for lowest service,—appointed to be trodden on, and fed upon. Its cheerfulness, in that it seems to exult under all kinds of violence and suffering. You roll it, and it is stronger the next day ; you mow it, and it multiplies its shoots, as if it were grateful ; you tread upon it, and it only sends up richer perfume. Spring comes, and it rejoices with all the earth,—glowing with varie-

gated flame of flowers,—waving in soft depth of fruitful strength. Winter comes, and though it will not mock its fellow plants by growing then, it will not pine and mourn, and turn colorless or leafless as they. It is always green; and is only the brighter and gayer for the hoar-frost.

§ 53. Now, these two characters—of humility, and joy under trial—are exactly those which most definitely distinguish the Christian from the Pagan spirit. Whatever virtue the pagan possessed was rooted in pride, and fruited with sorrow. It began in the elevation of his own nature; it ended but in the "verde smalto"—the hopeless green—of the Elysian fields. But the Christian virtue is rooted in self-debasement, and strengthened under suffering by gladness of hope. And remembering this, it is curious to observe how utterly without gladness the Greek heart appears to be in watching the flowering grass, and what strange discords of expression arise sometimes in consequence. There is one, recurring once or twice in Homer, which has always pained me. He says, "the Greek army was on the fields, as thick as flowers in the spring." It might be so; but flowers in spring time are not the image by which Dante would have numbered soldiers on their path of battle. Dante could not have thought of the flowering of the grass but as associated with happiness. There is a still deeper significance in the passage quoted, a little while ago, from Homer, describing Ulysses casting himself down on the *rushes* and the corn-giving land at the river shore,—the rushes and corn being to him only good for rest and sustenance,—when we compare it with that in which Dante tells us he was ordered to descend to the shore of the lake as he entered Purgatory, to gather a *rush*, and gird himself with it, it being to him the emblem not only of rest, but of humility under chastisement, the rush (or reed) being the only plant which can grow there;—"no plant which bears leaves, or hardens its bark, can live on that shore, because it does not yield to the chastisement of its waves." It cannot but strike the reader singularly how deep and harmonious a significance runs through all these words of Dante—how every syllable of them, the more we penetrate it, becomes a seed of farther thought! For, follow up this image of the girding with the reed, under trial, and see to whose feet it will lead us. As the grass of the earth, thought of

as the herb yielding seed, leads us to the place where our Lord commanded the multitude to sit down by companies upon the green grass; so the grass of the waters, thought of as sustaining itself among the waters of affliction, leads us to the place where a stem of it was put into our Lord's hand for his sceptre; and in the crown of thorns, and the rod of reed, was foreshown the everlasting truth of the Christian ages—that all glory was to be begun in suffering, and all power in humility.

Assembling the images we have traced, and adding the simplest of all, from Isaiah xl. 6., we find, the grass and flowers are types, in their passing, of the passing of human life, and, in their excellence, of the excellence of human life; and this in a twofold way; first, by their Beneficence, and then, by their endurance:—the grass of the earth, in giving the seed of corn, and in its beauty under tread of foot and stroke of scythe; and the grass of the waters, in giving its freshness for our rest, and in its bending before the wave.* But understood in the broad human and Divine sense, the "*herb* yielding seed" (as opposed to the fruit-tree yielding fruit) includes a third family of plants, and fulfils a third office to the human race. It includes the great family of the lints and flaxes, and fulfils thus the *three* offices of giving food, raiment, and rest. Follow out this fulfilment; consider the association of the linen garment and the linen embroidery, with the priestly office, and the furniture of the tabernacle; and consider how the rush has been, in all time, the first natural carpet thrown under the human foot. Then next observe the three virtues definitely set forth by the three families of plants; not arbitrarily or fancifully associated with them, but in all the three cases marked for us by Scriptural words:

1st. Cheerfulness, or joyful serenity; in the grass for food and beauty.—"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin."

2nd. Humility; in the grass for rest.—"A bruised reed shall He not break."

* So also in Isa. xxxv. 7., the prevalence of righteousness and peace over all evil is thus foretold:

"In the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be *grass*, with *reeds* and *rushes*."

3rd. Love; in the grass for clothing (because of its swift kindling),—"The smoking flax shall He not quench."

And then, finally, observe the confirmation of these last two images in, I suppose, the most important prophecy, relating to the future state of the Christian Church, which occurs in the Old Testament, namely, that contained in the closing chapters of Ezekiel. The measures of the Temple of God are to be taken; and because it is only by charity and humility that those measures ever can be taken, the angel has "a line of *flax* in his hand, and a measuring *reed*." The use of the line was to measure the land, and of the reed to take the dimensions of the buildings; so the buildings of the church, or its labors, are to be measured by *humility*, and its territory or land, by *love*.

The limits of the Church have, indeed, in later days, been measured, to the world's sorrow, by another kind of flaxen line, burning with the fire of unholy zeal, not with that of Christian charity; and perhaps the best lesson which we can finally take to ourselves, in leaving these sweet fields of the mediæval landscape, is the memory that, in spite of all the fettered habits of thought of his age, this great Dante, this inspired exponent of what lay deepest at the heart of the early Church, placed his terrestrial paradise where there had ceased to be fence or division, and where the grass of the earth was bowed down, in unity of direction, only by the soft waves that bore with them the forgetfulness of evil.

CHAPTER XV.

OF MEDIÆVAL LANDSCAPE:—SECONDLY, THE ROCKS.

§ 1. I CLOSED the last chapter, not because our subject was exhausted, but to give the reader breathing time, and because I supposed he would hardly care to turn back suddenly from the subjects of thought last suggested, to the less pregnant matters of inquiry connected with mediæval landscape. Nor was the pause mistimed even as respects the order of our subjects; for hitherto we have been arrested chiefly by the beauty of the pastures and fields, and have followed the mediæval mind in its fond regard of leaf and flower. But now we have some hard hill-climbing to do; and the remainder of our investigation must be carried on, for the most part, on hands and knees, so that it is not ill done of us first to take breath.

§ 2. It will be remembered that in the last chapter, § 14., we supposed it probable that there would be considerable inaccuracies in the mediæval mode of regarding nature. Hitherto, however, we have found none; but, on the contrary, intense accuracy, precision, and affection. The reason of this is, that all floral and foliaged beauty might be perfectly represented, as far as its form went, in the sculpture and ornamental painting of the period; hence the attention of men was thoroughly awakened to that beauty. But as mountains and clouds and large features of natural scenery could not be accurately represented, we must be prepared to find them not so carefully contemplated,—more carefully, indeed, than by the Greeks, but still in no wise as the things themselves deserve.

§ 3. It was besides noticed that mountains, though regarded with reverence by the mediæval, were also the subjects of a certain dislike and dread. And we have seen already that in fact the place of the soul's purification, though a mountain, is yet by Dante subdued, whenever there is any pleasantness to be

found upon it, from all mountainous character into grassy recesses, or slopes to rushy shore; and, in his general conception of it, resembles much more a castle mound, surrounded by terraced walks,—in the manner, for instance, of one of Turner's favorite scenes, the bank under Richmond Castle (Yorkshire); or, still more, one of the hill slopes divided by terraces, above the Rhine, in which the picturesqueness of the ground has been reduced to the form best calculated for the growing of costly wine, than any scene to which we moderns should naturally attach the term "Mountainous." On the other hand, although the Inferno is just as accurately measured and divided as the Purgatory, it is nevertheless cleft into rocky chasms which possess something of true mountain nature—nature which we moderns of the north should most of us seek with delight, but which, to the great Florentine, appeared adapted only for the punishment of lost spirits, and which, on the mind of nearly all his countrymen, would to this day produce a very closely correspondent effect; so that their graceful language, dying away on the north side of the Alps, gives its departing accents to proclaim its detestation of hardness and ruggedness; and is heard for the last time, as it bestows on the noblest defile in all the Grisons, if not in all the Alpine chain, the name of the "*evil* way"—"la Via Mala."

§ 4. This "evil way," though much deeper and more sublime, corresponds closely in general character to Dante's "Evil-pits," just as the banks of Richmond do to his mountain of Purgatory; and it is notable that Turner has been led to illustrate, with his whole strength, the character of both; having founded, as it seems to me, his early dreams of mountain form altogether on the sweet banks of the Yorkshire streams, and rooted his hardier thoughts of it in the rugged clefts of the Via Mala.

§ 5. Nor of the Via Mala only: a correspondent defile on the St. Gothard,—so terrible in one part of it, that it can, indeed, suggest no ideas but those of horror to minds either of northern or southern temper, and whose wild bridge, cast from rock to rock over a chasm as utterly hopeless and escapeless as any into which Dante gazed from the arches of Malebolge, has been, therefore, ascribed both by northern and southern lips to the

master-building of the great spirit of evil—supplied to Turner the element of his most terrible thoughts in mountain vision, even to the close of his life. The noblest plate in the series of the Liber Studiorum,* one engraved by his own hand, is of that bridge; the last mountain journey he ever took was up the defile; and a rocky bank and arch, in the last mountain drawing which he ever executed with his perfect power, are remembrances of the path by which he had traversed in his youth this Malebolge of the St. Gothard.

§ 6. It is therefore with peculiar interest, as bearing on our own proper subject, that we must examine Dante's conception of the rocks of the eighth circle. And first, as to general tone of color: from what we have seen of the love of the mediæval for bright and variegated color, we might guess that his chief cause of dislike to rocks would be, in Italy, their comparative colorlessness. With hardly an exception, the range of the Apennines is composed of a stone of which some special account is given hereafter in the chapters on Materials of Mountains, and of which one peculiarity, there noticed, is its monotony of hue. Our slates and granites are often of very lovely colors; but the Apennine limestone is so grey and toneless, that I know not any mountain district so utterly melancholy as those which are composed of this rock, when unwooded. Now, as far as I can discover from the internal evidence in his poem, nearly all Dante's mountain wanderings had been upon this ground. He had journeyed once or twice among the Alps, indeed, but seems to have been impressed chiefly by the road from Garda to Trent, and that along the Corniche, both of which are either upon those limestones, or a dark serpentine, which shows hardly any color till it is polished. It is not ascertainable that he had ever seen rocky scenery of the finely colored kind, aided by the Alpine mosses: I do not know the fall at Forli (Inferno, xvi. 99.), but every other scene to which he alludes is among these Apennine limestones; and when he wishes to give the idea of enormous mountain size, he names Tabernicch and Pietra-pana,—the one clearly chosen only for the sake of the last syllable of its name, in order to make a sound as of cracking ice, with the two se-

* It is an unpublished plate. I know only two impressions of it.

quent rhymes of the stanza,—and the other is an Apennine near Lucca.

§ 7. His idea, therefore, of rock color, founded on these experiences, is that of a dull or ashen grey, more or less stained by the brown of iron ochre, precisely as the Apennine limestones nearly always are; the grey being peculiarly cold and disagreeable. As we go down the very hill which stretches out from Pietra-pana towards Lucca, the stones laid by the roadside to mend it are of this ashen grey, with efflorescences of manganese and iron in the fissures. The whole of Malebolge is made of this rock, "All wrought in stone of iron-colored grain." *

Perhaps the iron color may be meant to predominate in Evilpits; but the definite grey limestone color is stated higher up, the river Styx flowing at the base of "malignant *grey* cliffs" † (the word malignant being given to the iron-colored Malebolge also); and the same whitish-grey idea is given again definitely in describing the robe of the purgatorial or penance angel, which is "of the color of ashes, or earth dug dry." Ashes necessarily mean *wood*-ashes in an Italian mind, so that we get the tone very pale; and there can be no doubt whatever about the hue meant, because it is constantly seen on the sunny sides of the Italian hills, produced by the scorching of the ground, a dusty and lifeless whitish grey, utterly painful and oppressive; and I have no doubt that this color, assumed eminently also by limestone crags in the sun, is the quality which Homer means to express by a term he applies often to bare rocks, and which is usually translated "craggy," or "rocky." Now Homer is indeed quite capable of talking of "rocky rocks," just as he talks sometimes of "wet water;" but I think he means more by this word: it sounds as if it were derived from another, meaning "meal," or "flour," and I have little doubt it means "mealy white;" the Greek limestones being for the most part brighter in effect than the Apennine ones.

§ 8. And the fact is, that the great and pre-eminent fault of southern, as compared with northern scenery, is this rock-

* (Cayley.) "Tutto di pietra, e di color ferrigno"—Inf. xviii. 2.

† "Maligne piagge grige."—Inf. vii. 108.

whiteness, which gives to distant mountain ranges, lighted by the sun, sometimes a faint and monotonous glow, hardly detaching itself from the whiter parts of the sky, and sometimes a speckled confusion of white light with blue shadow, breaking up the whole mass of the hills, and making them look near and small; the whiteness being still distinct at the distance of twenty or twenty-five miles. The inferiority and meagreness of such effects of hill, compared with the massive purple and blue of our own heaps of crags and morass, or the solemn grass-green and pine-purples of the Alps, have always struck me most painfully; and they have rendered it impossible for any poet or painter studying in the south, to enter with joy into hill scenery. Imagine the difference to Walter Scott, if instead of the single lovely color which, named by itself alone, was enough to describe his hills,—

> "Their southern rapine to renew,
> Far in the distant Cheviot's *blue*,"—

a dusty whiteness had been the image that first associated itself with a hill range, and he had been obliged, instead of "blue" Cheviots, to say, "barley-meal-colored" Cheviots.

§ 9. But although this would cause a somewhat painful shock even to a modern mind, it would be as nothing when compared with the pain occasioned by absence of color to a mediæval one. We have been trained, by our ingenious principles of Renaissance architecture, to think that meal-color and ash-color are the properest colors of all; and that the most aristocratic harmonies are to be deduced out of grey mortar and creamy stucco. Any of our modern classical architects would delightedly "face" a heathery hill with Roman cement; and any Italian sacristan would, but for the cost of it, at once whitewash the Cheviots. But the mediævals had not arrived at these abstract principles of taste. They liked fresco better than whitewash; and, on the whole, thought that Nature was in the right in painting her flowers yellow, pink, and blue;—not grey. Accordingly, this absence of color from rocks, as compared with meadows and trees, was in their eyes an unredeemable defect; nor did it matter to them whether its place was supplied by the grey neutral tint, or the iron-colored stain;

for both colors, grey and brown, were, to them, hues of distress, despair, and mortification, hence adopted always for the dresses of monks; only the word "brown" bore, in their color vocabulary, a still gloomier sense than with us. I was for some time embarrassed by Dante's use of it with respect to dark skies and water. Thus, in describing a simple twilight—not a Hades twilight, but an ordinarily fair evening—(Inf. ii. 1.) he says, the "brown" air took the animals of earth away from their fatigues;—the waves under Charon's boat are "brown" (Inf. iii. 117.); and Lethe, which is perfectly clear and yet dark, as with oblivion, is "bruna-bruna," "brown, *exceeding* brown." Now, clearly in all these cases no *warmth* is meant to be mingled in the color. Dante had never seen one of our bog-streams, with its porter-colored foam; and there can be no doubt that, in calling Lethe brown, he means that it was dark slate grey, inclining to black; as, for instance, our clear Cumberland lakes, which, looked straight down upon where they are deep, seem to be lakes of ink. I am sure this is the color he means; because no clear stream or lake on the Continent ever looks brown, but blue or green; and Dante, by merely taking away the pleasant color, would get at once to this idea of grave clear grey. So, when he was talking of twilight, his eye for color was far too good to let him call it *brown* in our sense. Twilight is not brown, but purple, golden, or dark grey; and this last was what Dante meant. Farther, I find that this negation of color is always the means by which Dante subdues his tones. Thus the fatal inscription on the Hades gate is written in "obscure color," and the air which torments the passionate spirits is "aer nero" *black* air (Inf. v. 51.), called presently afterwards (line 81.) malignant air, just as the grey cliffs are called malignant cliffs.

§ 10. I was not, therefore, at a loss to find out what Dante meant by the word; but I was at a loss to account for his not, as it seemed, acknowledging the existence of the color of *brown* at all; for if he called dark neutral tint "brown," it remained a question what term he would use for things of the color of burnt umber. But, one day, just when I was puzzling myself about this, I happened to be sitting by one of our best living modern colorists, watching him at his work, when he said,

suddenly, and by mere accident, after we had been talking of other things, "Do you know I have found that there is no *brown* in Nature? What we call brown is always a variety either of orange or purple. It never can be represented by umber, unless altered by contrast."

§ 11. It is curious how far the significance of this remark extends, how exquisitely it illustrates and confirms the mediæval sense of hue;—how far, on the other hand, it cuts into the heart of the old umber idolatries of Sir George Beaumont and his colleagues, the "where do you put your *brown* tree" system; the code of Cremona-violin-colored foregrounds, of brown varnish and asphaltum; and all the old night-owl science, which, like Young's pencil of sorrow,

> "In melancholy dipped, *embrowns* the whole."

Nay, I do Young an injustice by associating his words with the asphalt schools; for his eye for color was true, and like Dante's; and I doubt not that he means dark grey, as Byron purple-grey in that night piece in the Siege of Corinth, beginning

> "'Tis midnight; on the mountains *brown*
> The cold, round moon looks deeply down;"

and, by the way, Byron's best piece of evening color farther certifies the hues of Dante's twilight,—it

> "Dies like the dolphin, when it gasps away—
> The last still loveliest; till 'tis gone, and all is *grey*."

§ 12. Let not, however, the reader confuse the use of brown, as an expression of a natural tint, with its use as a means of *getting other tints*. Brown is often an admirable ground, just because it is the only tint which is *not* to be in the finished picture, and because it is the best basis of many silver greys and purples, utterly opposite to it in their nature. But there is infinite difference between laying a brown ground as a representation of shadow,—and as a base for light; and also an infinite difference between using brown shadows, associated with colored lights—always the characteristic of false schools of color—and using brown as a warm neutral tint for general study. I shall have to pursue this subject farther hereafter, in noticing how

brown is used by great colorists in their studies, not as color, but as the pleasantest negation of color, possessing more transparency than black, and having more pleasant and sunlike warmth. Hence Turner, in his early studies, used blue for distant neutral tint, and brown for foreground neutral tint; while, as he advanced in color science, he gradually introduced, in the place of brown, strange purples, altogether peculiar to himself, founded, apparently, on Indian red and vermilion, and passing into various tones of russet and orange.* But, in the meantime, we must go back to Dante and his mountains.

§ 13. We find, then, that his general type of rock color was meant, whether pale or dark, to be a colorless grey—the most melancholy hue which he supposed to exist in Nature (hence the synonym for it, subsisting even till late times, in mediæval appellatives of dress, "*sad*-colored")—with some rusty stain from iron; or perhaps the "color ferrigno" of the Inferno does not involve even so much of orange, but ought to be translated "iron grey."

This being his idea of the color of rocks, we have next to observe his conception of their substance. And I believe it will be found that the character on which he fixes first in them is *frangibility*—breakableness to bits, as opposed to wood, which can be sawn or rent, but not shattered with a hammer, and to metal, which is tough and malleable.

Thus, at the top of the abyss of the seventh circle, appointed for the "violent," or souls who had done evil by force, we are told, first, that the edge of it was composed of "great broken stones in a circle;" then, that the place was "Alpine;" and, becoming hereupon attentive, in order to hear what an Alpine place is like, we find that it was "like the place beyond Trent, where the rock, either by earthquake, or failure of support, has broken down to the plain, so that it gives any one at the top some means of getting down to the bottom." This is not a very elevated or enthusiastic description of an Alpine scene;

* It is in these subtle purples that even the more elaborate passages of the earlier drawings are worked; as, for instance, the Highland streams, spoken of in Pre-Raphaelitism. Also, Turner could, by opposition, get what color he liked out of a brown. I have seen cases in which he had made it stand for the purest *rose* light.

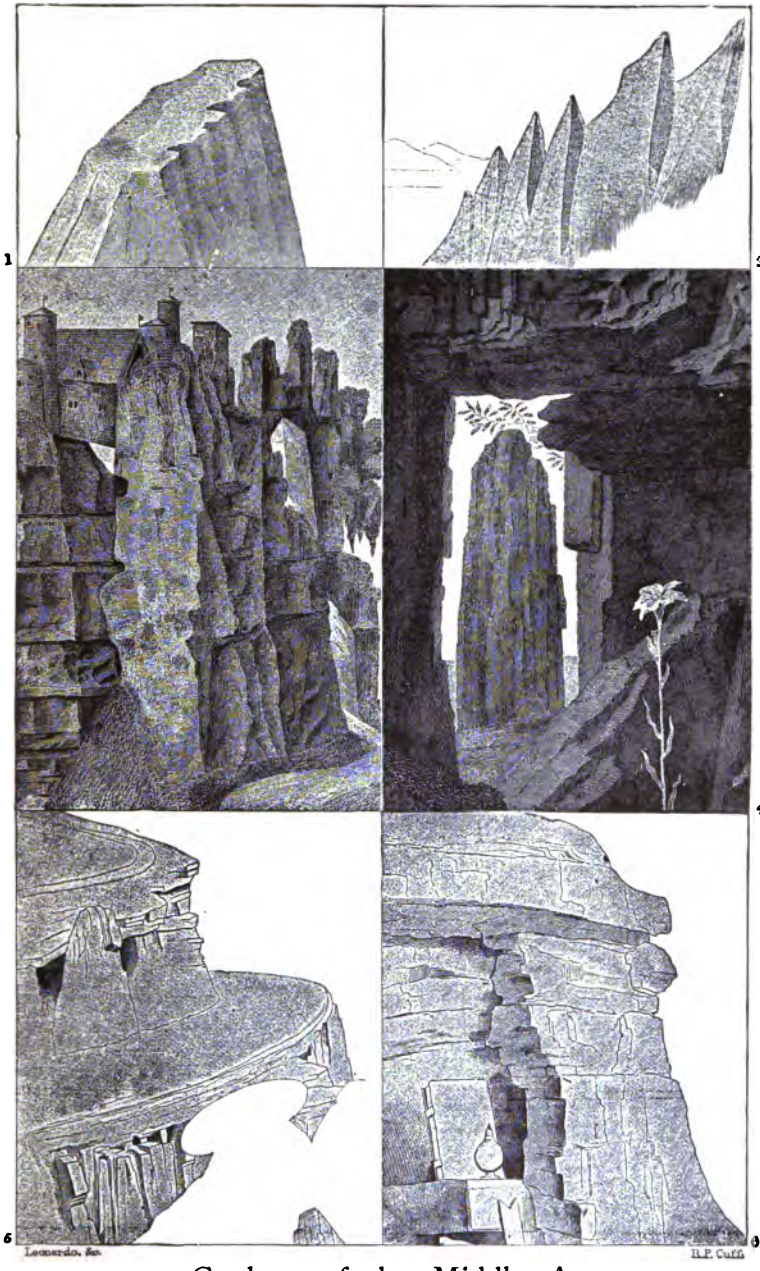
and it is far from mended by the following verses, in which we are told that Dante "began to go down by this great *unloading* of stones," and that they moved often under his feet by reason of the new weight. The fact is that Dante, by many expressions throughout the poem, shows himself to have been a notably bad climber; and being fond of sitting in the sun, looking at his fair Baptistery, or walking in a dignified manner on flat pavement in a long robe, it puts him seriously out of his way when he has to take to his hands and knees, or look to his feet; so that the first strong impression made upon him by any Alpine scene whatever, is, clearly, that it is bad walking. When he is in a fright and hurry, and has a very steep place to go down, Virgil has to carry him altogether, and is obliged to encourage him, again and again, when they have a steep slope to go up,—the first ascent of the purgatorial mountain. The similes by which he illustrates the steepness of that ascent are all taken from the Riviera of Genoa, now traversed by a good carriage road under the name of the Corniche; but as this road did not exist in Dante's time, and the steep precipices and promontories were then probably traversed by footpaths, which, as they necessarily passed in many places over crumbling and slippery limestone, were doubtless not a little dangerous, and as in the manner they commanded the bays of sea below, and lay exposed to the full blaze of the south-eastern sun, they corresponded precisely to the situation of the path by which he ascends above the purgatorial sea, the image could not possibly have been taken from a better source for the fully conveying his idea to the reader: nor, by the way, is there reason to discredit, in *this* place, his powers of climbing; for, with his usual accuracy, he has taken the angle of the path for us, saying it was considerably more than forty-five. Now a continuous mountain slope of forty-five degrees is already quite unsafe either for ascent or descent, except by zigzag paths; and a greater slope than this could not be climbed, straightforward, but by help of crevices or jags in the rock, and great physical exertion besides.

§ 14. Throughout these passages, however, Dante's thoughts are clearly fixed altogether on the question of mere accessibility or inaccessibility. He does not show the smallest interest in the rocks, except as things to be conquered; and his description of

their appearance is utterly meagre, involving no other epithets than "erto" (steep or upright), Inf. xix. 131., Purg. iii. 48. &c.; "sconcio" (monstrous), Inf. xix. 131.; "stagliata" (cut), Inf. xvii. 134.; "maligno" (malignant), Inf. vii. 108; "duro" (hard), xx. 25.; with "large" and "broken" (rotto) in various places. No idea of roundness, massiveness, or pleasant form of any kind appears for a moment to enter his mind; and the different names which are given to the rocks in various places seem merely to refer to variations in size: thus a "rocco" is a part of a "scoglio," Inf. xx. 25. and xxvi. 27.; a "scheggio" (xxi. 69. and xxvi. 17.) is a less fragment yet; a "petrone," or "sasso," is a large stone or boulder (Purg. iv. 101. 104.), and "pietra," a less stone,—both of these last terms, especially "sasso," being used for any large mountainous mass, as in Purg. xxi. 106.; and the vagueness of the word "monte" itself, like that of the French "montagne," applicable either to a hill on a post-road requiring the drag to be put on,—or to the Mont Blanc, marks a peculiar carelessness in both nations, at the time of the formation of their languages, as to the sublimity of the higher hills; so that the effect produced on an English ear by the word "mountain," signifying always a mass of a certain large size, cannot be conveyed either in French or Italian.

§ 15. In all these modes of regarding rocks we find (rocks being in themselves, as we shall see presently, by no means monstrous or frightful things) exactly that inaccuracy in the mediæval mind which we had been led to expect, in its bearings on things contrary to the spirit of that symmetrical and perfect humanity which had formed its ideal; and it is very curious to observe how closely in the terms he uses, and the feelings they indicate, Dante here agrees with Homer. For the word stagliata (cut) corresponds very nearly to a favorite term of Homer's respecting rocks "sculptured," used by him also of ships' sides; and the frescoes and illuminations of the Middle Ages enable us to ascertain exactly what this idea of "cut" rock was.

§ 16. In Plate 10. I have assembled some examples, which will give the reader a sufficient knowledge of mediæval rock-drawing, by men whose names are known. They are chiefly taken from engravings, with which the reader has it in his



10. Geology of the Middle Ages.

power to compare them,* and if, therefore, any injustice is done to the original paintings the fault is not mine; but the general impression conveyed is quite accurate, and it would not have been worth while, where work is so deficient in first conception, to lose time in insuring accuracy of facsimile. Some of the crags may be taller here, or broader there, than in the original paintings; but the character of the work is perfectly preserved, and that is all with which we are at present concerned.

Figs. 1. and 5. are by Ghirlandajo; 2. by Filippo Pesellino; 4. by Leonardo da Vinci; and 6. by Andrea del Castagno. All these are indeed workmen of a much later period than Dante, but the system of rock-drawing remains entirely unchanged from Giotto's time to Ghirlandajo's;—is then altered only by an introduction of stratification indicative of a little closer observance of nature, and so remains until Titian's time. Fig 1. is exactly representative of one of Giotto's rocks, though actually by Ghirlandajo; and Fig. 2. is rather less skilful than Giotto's ordinary work. Both these figures indicate precisely what Homer and Dante meant by "cut" rocks. They had observed the concave smoothness of certain rock fractures as eminently distinctive of rock from earth, and use the term "cut" or "sculptured" to distinguish the smooth surface from the knotty or sandy one, having observed nothing more respecting its real contours than is represented in Figs. 1. and 2., which look as if they had been hewn out with an adze. Lorenzo Ghiberti preserves the same type, even in his finest work.

Fig. 3., from an interesting sixteenth century MS. in the British Museum (Cotton, Augustus, A. 5.), is characteristic of the best later illuminators' work; and Fig. 5., from Ghirlandajo, is pretty illustrative of Dante's idea of terraces on the purgatorial mountain. It is the road by which the Magi descend in his picture of their Adoration, in the Academy of Florence. Of the other examples I shall have more to say in the chapter on Precipices; meanwhile we have to return to the landscape of the poem.

§ 17. Inaccurate as this conception of rock was, it seems to have been the only one which, in mediæval art, had place as re-

* The references are in Appendix I.

presentative of mountain scenery. To Dante, mountains are inconceivable except as great broken stones or crags; all their broad contours and undulations seem to have escaped his eye. It is, indeed, with his usual undertone of symbolic meaning that he describes the great broken stones, and the fall of the shattered mountain, as the entrance to the circle appointed for the punishment of the violent; meaning that the violent and cruel, notwithstanding all their iron hardness of heart, have no true strength, but, either by earthquake, or want of support, fall at last into desolate ruin, naked, loose, and shaking under the tread. But in no part of the poem do we find allusion to mountains in any other than a stern light; nor the slightest evidence that Dante cared to look at them. From that hill of San Miniato, whose steps he knew so well, the eye commands, at the farther extremity of the Val d'Arno, the whole purple range of the mountains of Carrara, peaked and mighty, seen always against the sunset light in silent outline, the chief forms that rule the scene as twilight fades away. By this vision Dante seems to have been wholly unmoved, and, but for Lucan's mention of Aruns at Luna, would seemingly not have spoken of the Carrara hills in the whole course of his poem: when he does allude to them, he speaks of their white marble, and their command of stars and sea, but has evidently no regard for the hills themselves. There is not a single phrase or syllable throughout the poem which indicates such a regard. Ugolino, in his dream, seemed to himself to be in the mountains, "by cause of which the Pisan cannot see Lucca;" and it is impossible to look up from Pisa to that hoary slope without remembering the awe that there is in the passage; nevertheless, it was as a hunting-ground only that he remembered those hills. Adam of Brescia, tormented with eternal thirst, remembers the hills of Romena, but only for the sake of their sweet waters:

> "The rills that glitter down the grassy slopes
> Of Casentino, making fresh and soft
> The banks whereby they glide to Arno's stream,
> Stand ever in my view."

And, whenever hills are spoken of as having any influence on character, the repugnance to them is still manifest; they are always causes of rudeness or cruelty:

"But that ungrateful and malignant race,
Who in old times came down from Fesole,
Ay, and still smack of their rough mountain flint,
Will, for thy good deeds, show thee enmity.
Take heed thou cleanse thee of their ways."

So again—

"As one *mountain-bred*,
Rugged, and clownish, if some city's walls
He chance to enter, round him stares agape."

§ 18. Finally, although the Carrara mountains are named as having command of the stars and sea, the *Alps* are never specially mentioned but in bad weather, or snow. On the sand of the circle of the blasphemers—

"Fell slowly wafting down
Dilated flakes of fire, as flakes of snow
On Alpine summit, when the wind is hushed."

So the Paduans have to defend their town and castles against inundation,

"Ere the genial warmth be felt,
On Chiarentana's top."

The clouds of anger, in Purgatory, can only be figured to the reader who has

"'On an Alpine height been ta'en by cloud,
Through which thou sawest no better than the mole
Doth through opacous membrane."

And in approaching the second branch of Lethe, the seven ladies pause,—

"Arriving at the verge
Of a dim umbrage hoar, such as is seen
Beneath green leaves and gloomy branches oft
To overbrow a bleak and Alpine cliff."

§ 19. Truly, it is unfair of Dante, that when he is going to use snow for a lovely image, and speak of it as melting away under heavenly sunshine, he must needs put it on the Apennines, not on the Alps:

"As snow that lies
Amidst the living rafters, on the back

Of Italy, congealed, when drifted high
And closely piled by rough Sclavonian blasts,
Breathe but the land whereon no shadow falls,
And straightway melting, it distils away,
Like a fire-wasted taper; thus was I,
Without a sigh, or tear, consumed in heart."

The reader will thank me for reminding him, though out of its proper order, of the exquisite passage of Scott which we have to compare with this:

"As snow upon the mountain's breast
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Sweet Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the monarch's feet she lay."

Examine the context of this last passage, and its beauty is quite beyond praise; but note the northern love of rocks in the very first words I have to quote from Scott, "The rocks that gave it rest." Dante could not have thought of his "cut rocks" as giving rest even to snow. He must put it on the pine branches, if it is to be at peace.

§ 20. There is only one more point to be noticed in the Dantesque landscape; namely, the feeling entertained by the poet towards the sky. And the love of mountains is so closely connected with the love of clouds, the sublimity of both depending much on their association, that having found Dante regardless of the Carrara mountains as seen from San Miniato, we may well expect to find him equally regardless of the clouds in which the sun sank behind them. Accordingly, we find that his only pleasure in the sky depends on its "white clearness,"—that turning into "bianca aspette di celestro" which is so peculiarly characteristic of fine days in Italy. His pieces of pure pale light are always exquisite. In the dawn on the purgatorial mountain, first, in its pale white, he sees the "tremola della marina"—trembling of the sea; then it becomes vermilion; and at last, near sunrise, orange. These are precisely the changes of a calm and perfect dawn. The scenery of Paradise begins with "Day added to day," the light of the sun so flooding the heavens, that "never rain nor river-made lake so wide;" and throughout the Paradise all the beauty depends on spheres of light, or stars, never on clouds. But the pit of the Inferno

is at first sight obscure, deep, and so *cloudy* that at its bottom nothing could be seen. When Dante and Virgil reach the marsh in which the souls of those who have been angry and sad in their lives are for ever plunged, they find it covered with thick fog; and the condemned souls say to them,—

> "We once were sad,
> In the *sweet air, made gladsome by the sun.*
> Now in these murky settlings are we sad."

Even the angel crossing the marsh to help them is annoyed by this bitter marsh smoke, "fummo acerbo," and continually sweeps it with his hand from before his face.

Anger, on the purgatorial mountain, is in like manner imaged, because of its blindness and wildness, by the Alpine clouds. As they emerge from its mist they see the white light radiated through the fading folds of it; and, except this appointed cloud, no other can touch the mountain of purification.

> "Tempest none, shower, hail, or snow,
> Hoar-frost, or dewy moistness, higher falls,
> Than that brief scale of threefold steps. Thick clouds,
> Nor scudding rack, are ever seen, swift glance
> Ne'er lightens, nor Thaumantian iris gleams."

Dwell for a little while on this intense love of Dante for light,—taught, as he is at last by Beatrice, to gaze on the sun itself like an eagle,—and endeavor to enter into his equally intense detestation of all mist, rack of cloud, or dimness of rain; and then consider with what kind of temper he would have regarded a landscape of Copley Fielding's or passed a day in the Highlands. He has, in fact, assigned to the souls of the gluttonous no other punishment in the Inferno than perpetuity of Highland weather:

> "Showers
> Ceaseless, accursed, heavy and cold, unchanged
> For ever, both in kind and in degree,—
> Large hail, discolored water, sleety flaw,
> Through the dim midnight air streamed down amain."

§ 21. However, in this immitigable dislike of clouds, Dante goes somewhat beyond the general temper of his age. For although the calm sky was alone loved, and storm and rain were

dreaded by all men, yet the white horizontal clouds of serene summer were regarded with great affection by all early painters, and considered as one of the accompaniments of the manifestation of spiritual power; sometimes, for theological reasons which we shall soon have to examine, being received, even without any other sign, as the types of blessing or Divine acceptance: and in almost every representation of the heavenly paradise, these level clouds are set by the early painters for its floor, or for thrones of its angels; whereas Dante retains steadily, through circle after circle, his cloudless thought, and concludes his painting of heaven, as he began it upon the purgatorial mountain, with the image of shadowless morning:

> "I raised my eyes, and as at morn is seen
> The horizon's eastern quarter to excel,
> So likewise, that pacific Oriflamb
> Glowed in the midmost, and toward every part,
> With like gradation paled away its flame."

But the best way of regarding this feeling of Dante's is as the ultimate and most intense expression of the love of light, color, and clearness, which, as we saw above, distinguished the mediæval from the Greek on one side, and, as we shall presently see, distinguished him from the modern on the other. For it is evident that precisely in the degree in which the Greek was agriculturally inclined, in that degree the sight of clouds would become to him more acceptable than to the mediæval knight, who only looked for the fine afternoons in which he might gather the flowers in his garden, and in no wise shared or imagined the previous anxieties of his gardener. Thus, when we find Ulysses comforted about Ithaca by being told it had "plenty of rain," and the maids of Colonos boasting of their country for the same reason, we may be sure that they had some regard for clouds; and accordingly, except Aristophanes, of whom more presently, all the Greek poets speak fondly of the clouds, and consider them the fitting resting-places of the gods; including in their idea of clouds not merely the thin clear cirrus, but the rolling and changing volume of the thunder-cloud; nor even these only, but also the dusty whirlwind cloud of the earth, as in that noble chapter of Herodotus which tells us of

the cloud, full of mystic voices, that rose out of the dust of Eleusis, and went down to Salamis. Clouds and rain were of course regarded with a like gratitude by the eastern and southern nations—Jews and Egyptians; and it is only among the northern mediævals, with whom fine weather was rarely so prolonged as to occasion painful drought, or dangerous famine, and over whom the clouds broke coldly and fiercely when they came, that the love of serene light assumes its intense character, and the fear of tempest is gloomiest; so that the powers of the clouds which to the Greek foretold his conquest at Salamis, and with whom he fought in alliance, side by side with their lightnings, under the crest of Parnassus, seemed, in the heart of the Middle Ages, to be only under the dominion of the spirit of evil. I have reserved, for our last example of the landscape of Dante, the passage in which this conviction is expressed; a passage not less notable for its close description of what the writer feared and disliked, than for the ineffable tenderness, in which Dante is always raised as much above all other poets, as in softness the rose above all other flowers. It is the spirit of Buonconte da Montefeltro who speaks:

"Then said another: 'Ah, so may thy wish,
That takes thee o'er the mountain, be fulfilled,
As thou shalt graciously give aid to mine!
Of Montefeltro I; Buonconte I:
Giovanna, nor none else, have care for me;
Sorrowing with these I therefore go.' I thus:
From Campaldino's field what force or chance
Drew thee, that ne'er thy sepulchre was known?'
'Oh!' answered he, 'at Casentino's foot
A stream there courseth, named Archiano, sprung
In Apennine, above the hermit's seat.
E'en where its name is cancelled, there came I,
Pierced in the throat, fleeing away on foot,
And bloodying the plain. Here sight and speech
failed me; and finishing with Mary's name,
I fell, and tenantless my flesh remained.
. . . . . .
That evil will, which in his intellect
Still follows evil, came;
. . . . . the valley, soon
As day was spent, *he covered o'er with cloud.*
From Pratomagno to the mountain range,

And stretched the sky above; so that the air,
Impregnate, changed to water. Fell the rain;
And to the fosses came all that the land
Contained not; and as mightiest streams are wont,
To the great river, with such headlong sweep,
Rushed, that nought stayed its course. My stiffened frame,
Laid at his mouth, the fell Archiano found,
And dashed it into Arno; from my breast
Loosening the cross, that of myself I made
When overcome with pain. He hurled me on,
Along the banks and bottom of his course;
Then in his muddy spoils encircling wrapt.' "

Observe, Buonconte, as he dies, crosses his arms over his breast, pressing them together, partly in his pain, partly in prayer. His body thus lies by the river shore, as on a sepulchral monument, the arms folded into a cross. The rage of the river, under the influence of the evil demon, *unlooses this cross*, dashing the body supinely away, and rolling it over and over by bank and bottom. Nothing can be truer to the action of a stream in fury than these lines. And how desolate is it all! The lonely flight,—the grisly wound, "pierced in the throat,"—the death, without help or pity,—only the name of Mary on the lips,—and the cross folded over the heart. Then the rage of the demon and the river,—the noteless grave,—and, at last, even she who had been most trusted forgetting him,—

"Giovanna, none else have care for me."

There is, I feel assured, nothing else like it in all the range of poetry; a faint and harsh echo of it, only, exists in one Scottish ballad, "The Twa Corbies."

Here, then, I think, we may close our inquiry into the nature of the mediæval landscape; not but that many details yet require to be worked out; but these will be best observed by recurrence to them, for comparison with similar details in modern landscape,—our principal purpose, the getting at the governing tones and temper of conception, being, I believe, now sufficiently accomplished. And I think that our subject may be best pursued by immediately turning from the mediæval to the perfectly modern landscape; for although I have much to say respecting the transitional state of mind exhibited in the six-

teenth and seventeenth centuries, I believe the transitions may be more easily explained after we have got clear sight of the extremes; and that by getting perfect and separate hold of the three great phases of art,—Greek, mediæval, and modern,—we shall be enabled to trace, with least chance of error, those curious vacillations which brought us to the modern temper while vainly endeavoring to resuscitate the Greek. I propose, therefore, in the next chapter, to examine the spirit of modern landscape, as seen generally in modern painting, and especially in the poetry of Scott.

CHAPTER XVI.

OF MODERN LANDSCAPE.

§ 1. We turn our eyes, therefore, as boldly and as quickly as may be, from these serene fields and skies of mediæval art, to the most characteristic examples of modern landscape. And, I believe, the first thing that will strike us, or that ought to strike us, is their *cloudiness*.

Out of perfect light and motionless air, we find ourselves on a sudden brought under sombre skies, and into drifting wind; and, with fickle sunbeams flashing in our face, or utterly drenched with sweep of rain, we are reduced to track the changes of the shadows on the grass, or watch the rents of twilight through angry cloud. And we find that whereas all the pleasure of the mediæval was in *stability*, *definiteness*, and *luminousness*, we are expected to rejoice in darkness, and triumph in mutability; to lay the foundation of happiness in things which momentarily change or fade; and to expect the utmost satisfaction and instruction from what is impossible to arrest, and difficult to comprehend.

§ 2. We find, however, together with this general delight in breeze and darkness, much attention to the real form of clouds, and careful drawing of effects of mist: so that the appearance of objects, as seen through it, becomes a subject of science with us: and the faithful representation of that appearance is made of primal importance, under the name of aerial perspective. The aspects of sunset and sunrise, with all their attendant phenomena of cloud and mist, are watchfully delineated; and in ordinary daylight landscape, the sky is considered of so much importance, that a principal mass of foliage, or a whole foreground, is unhesitatingly thrown into shade merely to bring out the form of a white cloud. So that, if a general and characteristic name were needed for modern landscape art, none better could be invented than "the service of clouds."

§ 3. And this name would, unfortunately, be characteristic of our art in more ways than one. In the last chapter, I said that all the Greeks spoke kindly about the clouds, except Aristophanes; and he, I am sorry to say (since his report is so unfavorable), is the only Greek who had studied them attentively. He tells us, first, that they are "great goddesses to idle men;" then, that they are "mistresses of disputings, and logic, and monstrosities, and noisy chattering;" declares that whoso believes in their divinity must first disbelieve in Jupiter, and place supreme power in the hands of an unknown god "Whirlwind;" and, finally, he displays their influence over the mind of one of their disciples, in his sudden desire "to speak ingeniously concerning smoke."

There is, I fear, an infinite truth in this Aristophanic judgment applied to our modern cloud-worship. Assuredly, much of the love of mystery in our romances, our poetry, our art, and, above all, in our metaphysics, must come under that definition so long ago given by the great Greek, "speaking ingeniously concerning smoke." And much of the instinct, which, partially developed in painting, may be now seen throughout every mode of exertion of mind,—the easily encouraged doubt, easily excited curiosity, habitual agitation, and delight in the changing and the marvellous, as opposed to the old quiet serenity of social custom and religious faith,—is again deeply defined in those few words, the "dethroning of Jupiter," the "coronation of the whirlwind."

§ 4. Nor of whirlwind merely, but also of darkness or ignorance respecting all stable facts. That darkening of the foreground to bring out the white cloud, is, in one aspect of it, a type of the subjection of all plain and positive fact, to what is uncertain and unintelligible. And as we examine farther into the matter, we shall be struck by another great difference between the old and modern landscape, namely, that in the old no one ever thought of drawing anything but as well *as he could*. That might not be *well*, as we have seen in the case of rocks; but it was as well as he *could*, and always distinctly. Leaf, or stone, or animal, or man, it was equally drawn with care and clearness, and its essential characters shown. If it was an oak tree, the acorns were drawn; if a flint pebble, its

veins were drawn; if an arm of the sea, its fish were drawn; if a group of figures, their faces and dresses were drawn—to the very last subtlety of expression and end of thread that could be got into the space, far off or near. But now our ingenuity is all "concerning smoke." Nothing is truly drawn but that; all else is vague, slight, imperfect; got with as little pains as possible. You examine your closest foreground, and find no leaves; your largest oak, and find no acorns; your human figure, and find a spot of red paint instead of a face; and in all this, again and again, the Aristophanic words come true, and the clouds seem to be "great goddesses to idle men."

§ 5. The next thing that will strike us, after this love of clouds, is the love of liberty. Whereas the mediæval was always shutting himself into castles, and behind fosses, and drawing brickwork neatly, and beds of flowers primly, our painters delight in getting to the open fields and moors; abhor all hedges and moats; never paint anything but free-growing trees, and rivers gliding "at their own sweet will;" eschew formality down to the smallest detail; break and displace the brickwork which the mediæval would have carefully cemented; leave unpruned the thickets he would have delicately trimmed; and, carrying the love of liberty even to license, and the love of wildness even to ruin, take pleasure at last in every aspect of age and desolation which emancipates the objects of nature from the government of men;—on the castle wall displacing its tapestry with ivy, and spreading, through the garden, the bramble for the rose.

§ 6. Connected with this love of liberty we find a singular manifestation of love of mountains, and see our painters traversing the wildest places of the globe in order to obtain subjects with craggy foregrounds and purple distances. Some few of them remain content with pollards and flat land; but these are always men of third-rate order; and the leading masters, while they do not reject the beauty of the low grounds, reserve their highest powers to paint Alpine peaks or Italian promontories. And it is eminently noticeable, also, that this pleasure in the mountains is never mingled with fear, or tempered by a spirit of meditation, as with the mediæval; but it is always free and fearless, brightly exhilarating, and wholly unreflective; so that

the painter feels that his mountain foreground may be more consistently animated by a sportsman than a hermit; and our modern society in general goes to the mountains, not to fast, but to feast, and leaves their glaciers covered with chicken-bones and egg-shells.

§ 7. Connected with this want of any sense of solemnity in mountain scenery, is a general profanity of temper in regarding all the rest of nature; that is to say, a total absence of faith in the presence of any deity therein. Whereas the mediæval never painted a cloud, but with the purpose of placing an angel in it; and a Greek never entered a wood without expecting to meet a god in it; *we* should think the appearance of an angel in the cloud wholly unnatural, and should be seriously surprised by meeting a god anywhere. Our chief ideas about the wood are connected with poaching. We have no belief that the clouds contain more than so many inches of rain or hail, and from our ponds and ditches expect nothing more divine than ducks and watercresses.

§ 8. Finally: connected with this profanity of temper is a strong tendency to deny the sacred element of color, and make our boast in blackness. For though occasionally glaring, or violent, modern color is on the whole eminently sombre, tending continually to grey or brown, and by many of our best painters consistently falsified, with a confessed pride in what they call chaste or subdued tints; so that, whereas a mediæval paints his sky bright blue, and his foreground bright green, gilds the towers of his castles, and clothes his figures with purple and white, we paint our sky grey, our foreground black, and our foliage brown, and think that enough is sacrificed to the sun in admitting the dangerous brightness of a scarlet cloak or a blue jacket.

§ 9. These, I believe, are the principal points which would strike us instantly, if we were to be brought suddenly into an exhibition of modern landscapes out of a room filled with mediæval work. It is evident that there are both evil and good in this change; but how much evil, or how much good, we can only estimate by considering, as in the former divisions of our inquiry, what are the real roots of the habits of mind which have caused them.

And first, it is evident that the title "Dark Ages," given to the mediæval centuries, is, respecting art, wholly inapplicable. They were, on the contrary, the bright ages; ours are the dark ones. I do not mean metaphysically, but literally. They were the ages of gold: ours are the ages of umber.

Distinctive characters of the modern mind:

This is partly mere mistake in us; we build brown brick walls, and wear brown coats, because we have been blunderingly taught to do so, and go on doing so mechanically. There is, however, also some cause for the change in our own tempers. On the whole, these are much *sadder* ages than the early ones; not sadder in a noble and deep way, but in a dim, wearied way,—the way of ennui, and jaded intellect, and uncomfortableness of soul and body. The Middle Ages had their wars and agonies, but also intense delights. Their gold was dashed with blood; but ours is sprinkled with dust. Their life was interwoven with white and purple; ours is one seamless stuff of brown. Not that we are without apparent festivity, but festivity more or less forced, mistaken, embittered, incomplete—not of the heart. How wonderfully, since Shakspere's time, have we lost the power of laughing at bad jests! The very finish of our wit belies our gaiety.

1. Despondency arising from faithlessness.

§ 10. The profoundest reason of this darkness of heart is, I believe, our want of faith. There never yet was a generation of men (savage or civilized) who, taken as a body, so wofully fulfilled the words, "having no hope, and without God in the world," as the present civilized European race. A Red Indian or Otaheitan savage has more sense of a Divine existence round him, or government over him, than the plurality of refined Londoners and Parisians; and those among us who may in some sense be said to believe, are divided almost without exception into two broad classes, Romanist and Puritan; who, but for the interference of the unbelieving portions of society, would, either of them, reduce the other sect as speedily as possible to ashes; the Romanist having always done so whenever he could, from the beginning of their separation, and the Puritan at this time holding himself in complacent expectation of the destruction of Rome by volcanic fire. Such division as this between

persons nominally of one religion, that is to say, believing in the same God, and the same Revelation, cannot but become a stumbling-block of the gravest kind to all thoughtful and far-sighted men,—a stumbling-block which they can only surmount under the most favorable circumstances of early education. Hence, nearly all our powerful men in this age of the world are unbelievers; the best of them in doubt and misery; the worst in reckless defiance; the plurality in plodding hesitation, doing, as well as they can, what practical work lies ready to their hands. Most of our scientific men are in this last class; our popular authors either set themselves definitely against all religious form, pleading for simple truth and benevolence (Thackeray, Dickens), or give themselves up to bitter and fruitless statement of facts (De Balzac), or surface-painting (Scott), or careless blasphemy, sad or smiling (Byron, Beranger). Our earnest poets, and deepest thinkers, are doubtful and indignant (Tennyson, Carlyle); one or two, anchored, indeed, but anxious, or weeping (Wordsworth, Mrs. Browning); and of these two, the first is not so sure of his anchor, but that now and then it drags with him, even to make him cry out,—

"Great God, I had rather be
A Pagan suckled in some creed outworn:
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn."

In politics, religion is now a name; in art, a hypocrisy or affectation. Over German religious pictures the inscription, "See how Pious I am," can be read at a glance by any clear-sighted person. Over French and English religious pictures, the inscription, "See how Impious I am," is equally legible. All sincere and modest art is, among us, profane.*

This faithlessness operates among us according to our tempers, producing either sadness or levity, and being the ultimate root alike of our discontents and of our wantonnesses. It is marvellous how full of contradiction it makes us; we are first dull, and seek for wild and lonely places because we have no heart for the garden;

§ 11. 2. Levity from the same cause.

* Pre-Raphaelitism, of course, excepted, which is a new phase of art, in no wise considered in this chapter. Blake was sincere, but full of wild creeds, and somewhat diseased in brain.

presently we recover our spirits, and build an assembly room among the mountains, because we have no reverence for the desert. I do not know if there be game on Sinai, but I am always expecting to hear of some one's shooting over it.

§ 12. There is, however, another, and a more innocent root of our delight in wild scenery.

All the Renaissance principles of art tended, as I have before often explained, to the setting Beauty above Truth, and seeking for it always at the expense of truth. And the proper punishment of such pursuit—the punishment which all the laws of the universe rendered inevitable—was, that those who thus pursued beauty should wholly lose sight of beauty. All the thinkers of the age, as we saw previously, declared that it did not exist. The age seconded their efforts, and banished beauty, so far as human effort could succeed in doing so, from the face of the earth, and the form of man. To powder the hair, to patch the cheek, to hoop the body, to buckle the foot, were all part and parcel of the same system which reduced streets to brick walls, and pictures to brown stains. One desert of Ugliness was extended before the eyes of mankind; and their pursuit of the beautiful, so recklessly continued, received unexpected consummation in high-heeled shoes and periwigs,—Gower Street, and Gaspar Poussin.

a. Reactionary love of inanimate beauty.

§ 13. Reaction from this state was inevitable, if any true life was left in the races of mankind; and, accordingly, though still forced, by rule and fashion, to the producing and wearing all that is ugly, men steal out, half-ashamed of themselves for doing so, to the fields and mountains; and, finding among these the color, and liberty, and variety, and power, which are for ever grateful to them, delight in these to an extent never before known; rejoice in all the wildest shattering of the mountain side, as an opposition to Gower Street; gaze in a rapt manner at sunsets and sunrises, to see there the blue, and gold, and purple, which glow for them no longer on knight's armor or temple porch; and gather with care out of the fields, into their blotted herbaria, the flowers which the five orders of architecture have banished from their doors and casements.

The absence of care for personal beauty, which is another great characteristic of the age, adds to this feeling in a twofold

way: first, by turning all reverent thoughts away from human nature; and making us think of men as ridiculous or ugly creatures, getting through the world as well as they can, and spoiling it in doing so; not ruling it in a kingly way and crowning all its loveliness. In the Middle Ages hardly anything but vice could be caricatured, because virtue was always visibly and personally noble; now virtue itself is apt to inhabit such poor human bodies, that no aspect of it is invulnerable to jest; and for all fairness we have to seek to the flowers, for all sublimity, to the hills.

§ 14. 4. Disdain of beauty in man.

The same want of care operates, in another way, by lowering the standard of health, increasing the susceptibility to nervous or sentimental impressions, and thus adding to the other powers of nature over us whatever charm may be felt in her fostering the melancholy fancies of brooding idleness.

It is not, however, only to existing inanimate nature that our want of beauty in person and dress has driven us. The imagination of it, as it was seen in our ancestors, haunts us continually; and while we yield to the present fashions, or act in accordance with the dullest modern principles of economy and utility, we look fondly back to the manners of the ages of chivalry, and delight in painting, to the fancy, the fashions we pretend to despise, and the splendors we think it wise to abandon. The furniture and personages of our romance are sought, when the writer desires to please most easily, in the centuries which we profess to have surpassed in everything; the art which takes us into the present times is considered as both daring and degraded; and while the weakest words please us, and are regarded as poetry, which recall the manners of our forefathers, or of strangers, it is only as familiar and vulgar that we accept the description of our own.

§ 15. 5. Romantic imagination of the past.

In this we are wholly different from all the races that preceded us. All other nations have regarded their ancestors with reverence as saints or heroes; but have nevertheless thought their own deeds and ways of life the fitting subjects for their arts of painting or of verse. We, on the contrary, regard our ancestors as foolish and wicked, but yet find our chief artistic pleasures in descriptions of their ways of life.

The Greeks and mediævals honored, but did not imitate, their forefathers; we imitate, but do not honor.

With this romantic love of beauty, forced to seek in history, and in external nature, the satisfaction it cannot find in ordinary life, we mingle a more rational passion, the due and just result of newly awakened powers of attention. Whatever may first lead us to the scrutiny of natural objects, that scrutiny never fails of its reward. Unquestionably they are intended to be regarded by us with both reverence and delight; and every hour we give to them renders their beauty more apparent, and their interest more engrossing. Natural science—which can hardly be considered to have existed before modern times—rendering our knowledge fruitful in accumulation and exquisite in accuracy, has acted for good or evil, according to the temper of the mind which received it; and though it has hardened the faithlessness of the dull and proud, has shown new grounds for reverence to hearts which were thoughtful and humble. The neglect of the art of war, while it has somewhat weakened and deformed the body,* has given us leisure and opportunity for studies to which, before, time and space were equally wanting; lives which once were early wasted on the battle field are now passed usefully in the study; nations which exhausted themselves in annual warfare now dispute with each other the discovery of new planets; and the serene philosopher dissects the plants, and analyzes the dust, of lands which were of old only traversed by the knight in hasty march, or by the borderer in heedless rapine.

§ 16. 6. Interest in science.

7. Fear of war.

§ 17. The elements of progress and decline being thus strangely mingled in the modern mind, we might beforehand anticipate that one of the notable characters of our art would be its inconsistency; that efforts would be made in every direction, and arrested by every conceivable cause and manner of failure; that in all we did, it would become next to impossible to distin-

* Of course this is only meant of the modern citizen or country gentleman, as compared with a citizen of Sparta or old Florence. I leave it to others to say whether the "neglect of the *art* of war" may or may not, in a yet more fatal sense, be predicated of the English nation. War, *without* art, we seem, with God's help, able still to wage nobly.

guish accurately the grounds for praise or for regret; that all previous canons of practice and methods of thought would be gradually overthrown, and criticism continually defied by successes which no one had expected, and sentiments which no one could define.

§ 18. Accordingly, while, in our inquiries into Greek and mediæval art, I was able to describe, in general terms, what all men did or felt, I find now many characters in many men; some, it seems to me, founded on the inferior and evanescent principles of modernism, on its recklessness, impatience, or faithlessness; others founded on its science, its new affection for nature, its love of openness and liberty. And among all these charaters, good or evil, I see that some, remaining to us from old or transitional periods, do not properly belong to us, and will soon fade away; and others, though not yet distinctly developed, are yet properly our own, and likely to grow forward into greater strength.

For instance: our reprobation of bright color is, I think, for the most part, mere affectation, and must soon be done away with. Vulgarity, dulness, or impiety, will indeed always express themselves through art in brown and grey, as in Rembrandt, Caravaggio, and Salvator; but we are not wholly vulgar, dull, or impious; nor, as moderns, are we necessarily obliged to continue so in any wise. Our greatest men, whether sad or gay, still delight, like the great men of all ages, in brilliant hues. The coloring of Scott and Byron is full and pure; that of Keats and Tennyson rich even to excess. Our practical failures in coloring are merely the necessary consequences of our prolonged want of practice during the periods of Renaissance affectation and ignorance; and the only durable difference between old and modern coloring, is the acceptance of certain hues, by the modern, which please him by expressing that melancholy peculiar to his more reflective or sentimental character, and the greater variety of them necessary to express his greater science.

§ 19. Again: if we ever become wise enough to dress consistently and gracefully, to make health a principal object in education, and to render our streets beautiful with art, the external charm of past history will in great measure disappear.

There is no essential reason, because we live after the fatal seventeenth century, that we should never again be able to confess interest in sculpture, or see brightness in embroidery; nor, because now we choose to make the night deadly with our pleasures, and the day with our labors, prolonging the dance till dawn, and the toil to twilight, that we should never again learn how rightly to employ the sacred trusts of strength, beauty, and time. Whatever external charm attaches itself to the past, would then be seen in proper subordination to the brightness of present life; and the elements of romance would exist, in the earlier ages, only in the attraction which must generally belong to whatever is unfamiliar; in the reverence which a noble nation always pays to its ancestors; and in the enchanted light which races, like individuals, must perceive in looking back to the days of their childhood.

§ 20. Again: the peculiar levity with which natural scenery is regarded by a large number of modern minds cannot be considered as entirely characteristic of the age, inasmuch as it never can belong to its greatest intellects. Men of any high mental power must be serious, whether in ancient or modern days: a certain degree of reverence for fair scenery is found in all our great writers without exception,—even the one who has made us laugh oftenest, taking us to the valley of Chamouni, and to the sea beach, there to give peace after suffering, and change revenge into pity.* It is only the dull, the uneducated, or the worldly, whom it is painful to meet on the hill sides; and levity, as a ruling character, cannot be ascribed to the whole nation, but only to its holiday-making apprentices, and its House of Commons.

§ 21. We need not, therefore, expect to find any single poet or painter representing the entire group of powers, weaknesses, and inconsistent instincts which govern or confuse our modern life. But we may expect that in the man who seems to be given by Providence as the type of the age (as Homer and Dante were given, as the types of classical and mediæval mind), we shall find whatever is fruitful and substantial to be completely present, together with those of our weaknesses, which are in-

* See David Copperfield, chap. lv. and lviii.

deed nationally characteristic, and compatible with general greatness of mind; just as the weak love of fences, and dislike of mountains, were found compatible with Dante's greatness in other respects.

§ 22. Farther: as the admiration of mankind is found, in our times, to have in great part passed from men to mountains, and from human emotion to natural phenomena, we may anticipate that the great strength of art will also be warped in this direction; with this notable result for us, that whereas the greatest painters or painter of classical and mediæval periods, being wholly devoted to the representation of humanity, furnished us with but little to examine in landscape, the greatest painters or painter of modern times will in all probability be devoted to landscape principally; and farther, because in representing human emotion words surpass painting, but in representing natural scenery painting surpasses words, we may anticipate also that the painter and poet (for convenience' sake I here use the words in opposition) will somewhat change their relations of rank in illustrating the mind of the age; that the painter will become of more importance, the poet of less; and that the relations between the men who are the types and first-fruits of the age in word and work,—namely, Scott and Turner,—will be, in many curious respects, different from those between Homer and Phidias, or Dante and Giotto.

It is this relation which we have now to examine.

§ 23. And, first, I think it probable that many readers may be surprised at my calling Scott the great representative of the mind of the age in literature. Those who can perceive the intense penetrative depth of Wordsworth, and the exquisite finish and melodious power of Tennyson, may be offended at my placing in higher rank that poetry of careless glance, and reckless rhyme, in which Scott poured out the fancies of his youth; and those who are familiar with the subtle analysis of the French novelists, or who have in any wise submitted themselves to the influence of German philosophy, may be equally indignant at my ascribing a principality to Scott among the literary men of Europe, in an age which has produced De Balzac and Goethe.

So also in painting, those who are acquainted with the sentimental efforts made at present by the German religious and his-

torical schools, and with the disciplined power and learning of the French, will think it beyond all explanation absurd to call a painter of light water-color landscapes, eighteen inches by twelve, the first representative of the arts of the age. I can only crave the reader's patience, and his due consideration of the following reasons for my doing so, together with those advanced in the farther course of the work.

§ 24. I believe the first test of a truly great man is his humility. I do not mean, by humility, doubt of his own power, or hesitation in speaking of his opinions; but a right understanding of the relation between what *he* can do and say, and the rest of the world's sayings and doings. All great men not only know their business, but usually know that they know it; and are not only right in their main opinions, but they usually know that they are right in them; only, they do not think much of themselves on that account. Arnolfo knows he can build a good dome at Florence; Albert Durer writes calmly to one who had found fault with his work, "It cannot be better done;" Sir Isaac Newton knows that he has worked out a problem or two that would have puzzled anybody else;—only they do not expect their fellow-men therefore to fall down and worship them; they have a curious under-sense of powerlessness, feeling that the greatness is not *in* them, but *through* them; that they could not do or be anything else than God made them. And they see something divine and God-made in every other man they meet, and are endlessly, foolishly, incredibly merciful.

§ 25. Now, I find among the men of the present age, as far as I know them, this character in Scott and Turner pre-eminently; I am not sure if it is not in them alone. I do not find Scott talking about the dignity of literature, nor Turner about the dignity of painting. They do their work, feeling that they cannot well help it; the story must be told, and the effect put down; and if people like it, well and good; and if not, the world will not be much the worse.

I believe a very different impression of their estimate of themselves and their doings will be received by any one who reads the conversations of Wordsworth or Goethe. The *slightest* manifestation of jealousy or self-complacency is enough to

mark a second-rate character of the intellect; and I fear that especially in Goethe, such manifestations are neither few nor slight.

§ 26. Connected with this general humility is the total absence of affectation in these men,—that is to say, of any assumption of manner or behavior in their work, in order to attract attention. Not but that they are mannerists both. Scott's verse is strongly mannered, and Turner's oil painting; but the manner of it is necessitated by the feelings of the men, entirely natural to both, never exaggerated for the sake of show. I hardly know any other literary or pictorial work of the day which is not in some degree affected. I am afraid Wordsworth was often affected in his simplicity, and De Balzac in his finish. Many fine French writers are affected in their reserve, and full of stage tricks in placing of sentences. It is lucky if in German writers we ever find so much as a sentence without affectation. I know no painters without it, except one or two Pre-Raphaelites (chiefly Holman Hunt), and some simple water-color painters, as William Hunt, William Turner of Oxford, and the late George Robson; but these last have no invention, and therefore by our fourth canon, Chap. III. sec. 21., are excluded from the first rank of artists; and of the Pre-Raphaelites there is here no question, as they in no wise represent the modern school.

§ 27. Again: another very important, though not infallible, test of greatness is, as we have often said, the appearance of Ease with which the thing is done. It may be that, as with Dante and Leonardo, the finish given to the work effaces the evidence of ease; but where the ease is manifest, as in Scott, Turner, and Tintoret; and the thing done is very noble, it is a strong reason for placing the men above those who confessedly work with great pains. Scott writing his chapter or two before breakfast—not retouching, Turner finishing a whole drawing in a forenoon before he goes out to shoot (providing always the chapter and drawing be good), are instantly to be set above men who confessedly have spent the day over the work, and think the hours well spent if it has been a little mended between sunrise and sunset. Indeed, it is no use for men to think to appear great by working fast, dashing, and scrawling; the thing

they do must be good and great, cost what time it may; but if it *be* so, and they have honestly and unaffectedly done it with *no effort*, it is probably a greater and better thing than the result of the hardest efforts of others.

§ 28. Then, as touching the kind of work done by these two men, the more I think of it I find this conclusion more impressed upon me,—that the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to *see* something, and tell what it *saw* in a plain way. Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think, but thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion,—all in one.

Therefore, finding the world of Literature more or less divided into Thinkers and Seers, I believe we shall find also that the Seers are wholly the greater race of the two. A true Thinker, who has practical purpose in his thinking, and is sincere, as Plato, or Carlyle, or Helps, becomes in some sort a seer, and must be always of infinite use in his generation; but an affected Thinker, who supposes his thinking of any other importance than as it tends to work, is about the vainest kind of person that can be found in the occupied classes. Nay, I believe that metaphysicians and philosophers are, on the whole, the greatest troubles the world has got to deal with; and that while a tyrant or bad man is of some use in teaching people submission or indignation, and a thoroughly idle man is only harmful in setting an idle example, and communicating to other lazy people his own lazy misunderstandings, busy metaphysicians are always entangling *good* and *active* people, and weaving cobwebs among the finest wheels of the world's business; and are as much as possible, by all prudent persons, to be brushed out of their way, like spiders, and the meshed weed that has got into the Cambridgeshire canals, and other such impediments to barges and business. And if we thus clear the metaphysical element out of modern literature, we shall find its bulk amazingly diminished, and the claims of the remaining writers, or of those whom we have thinned by this abstraction of their straw stuffing, much more easily adjusted.*

* Observe, I do not speak thus of metaphysics because I have no pleasure in them. When I speak contemptuously of philology, it may be answered me, that I am a bad scholar; but I cannot be so answered touch-

§ 29. Again: the mass of sentimental literature, concerned with the analysis and description of emotion, headed by the poetry of Byron, is altogether of lower rank than the literature which merely describes what it saw. The true Seer always feels as intensely as any one else; but he does not much describe his feelings. He tells you whom he met, and what they said; leaves you to make out, from that, what they feel, and what he feels, but goes into little detail. And, generally speaking, pathetic writing and careful explanation of passion are quite easy, compared with this plain recording of what people said or did, or with the right invention of what they are likely to say and do; for this reason, that to invent a story, or admirably and thoroughly tell any part of a story, it is necessary to grasp the entire mind of every personage concerned in it, and know precisely how they would be affected by what happens; which to do requires a colossal intellect; but to describe a separate emotion delicately, it is only needed that one should feel it oneself; and thousands of people are capable of feeling this or that noble emotion, for one who is able to enter into all the feelings of somebody sitting on the other side of the table. Even, therefore, when this sentimental literature is first rate, as in passages of Byron, Tennyson, and Keats, it ought not to be ranked so high as the Creative; and though perfection, even in narrow fields, is perhaps as rare as in the wider, and it may be as long before we have another In Memoriam as another Guy Mannering, I unhesitatingly receive as a greater manifestation of power the right invention of a few sentences spoken by Pleydell and Mannering across their supper-table, than the most tender and passionate melodies of the self-examining verse.

§ 30. Having, therefore, cast metaphysical writers out of our way, and sentimental writers into the second rank, I do not think Scott's supremacy among those who remain will any more be doubtful; nor would it, perhaps, have been doubtful before, had it not been encumbered by innumerable faults and weaknesses. But it is pre-eminently in these faults and weaknesses

ing metaphysics, for every one conversant with such subjects may see that I have strong inclination that way, which would, indeed, have led me far astray long ago, if I had not learned also some use of my hands, eyes, and feet.

that Scott is representative of the mind of his age: and because he is the greatest man born amongst us, and intended for the enduring type of us, all our principal faults must be laid on his shoulders, and he must bear down the dark marks to the latest ages; while the smaller men, who have some special work to do, perhaps not so much belonging to this age as leading out of it to the next, are often kept providentially quit of the encumbrances which they had not strength to sustain, and are much smoother and pleasanter to look at, in their way; only that is a smaller way.

§ 31. Thus, the most startling fault of the age being its faithlessness, it is necessary that its greatest man should be faithless. Nothing is more notable or sorrowful in Scott's mind than its incapacity of steady belief in anything. He cannot even resolve hardily to believe in a ghost, or a water-spirit; always explains them away in an apologetic manner, not believing, all the while, even his own explanation. He never can clearly ascertain whether there is anything behind the arras but rats; never draws sword, and thrusts at it for life or death; but goes on looking at it timidly, and saying, "it must be the wind." He is educated a Presbyterian, and remains one, because it is the most sensible thing he can do if he is to live in Edinburgh; but he thinks Romanism more picturesque, and profaneness more gentlemanly: does not see that anything affects human life but love, courage, and destiny; which are, indeed, not matters of faith at all, but of sight. Any gods but those are very misty in outline to him; and when the love is laid ghastly in poor Charlotte's coffin; and the courage is no more of use,—the pen having fallen from between the fingers; and destiny is sealing the scroll,—the God-light is dim in the tears that fall on it.

He is in all this the epitome of his epoch.

§ 32. Again: as another notable weakness of the age is its habit of looking back, in a romantic and passionate idleness, to the past ages, not understanding them all the while, nor really desiring to understand them, so Scott gives up nearly the half of his intellectual power to a fond, yet purposeless, dreaming over the past, and spends half his literary labors in endeavors to revive it, not in reality, but on the stage of fiction; endeav-

ors which were the best of the kind that modernism made, but still successful only so far as Scott put, under the old armor, the everlasting human nature which he knew; and totally unsuccessful, so far as concerned the painting of the armor itself, which he knew *not*. The excellence of Scott's work is precisely in proportion to the degree in which it is sketched from present nature. His familiar life is inimitable; his quiet scenes of introductory conversation, as the beginning of Rob Roy and Redgauntlet, and all his living Scotch characters, mean or noble, from Andrew Fairservice to Jeanie Deans, are simply right, and can never be bettered. But his romance and antiquarianism, his knighthood and monkery, are all false, and he knows them to be false; does not care to make them earnest; enjoys them for their strangeness, but laughs at his own antiquarianism, all through his own third novel,—with exquisite modesty indeed, but with total misunderstanding of the function of an Antiquary. He does not see how anything is to be got out of the past but confusion, old iron on drawing-room chairs, and serious inconvenience to Dr. Heavysterne.

§ 33. Again: more than any age that had preceded it, ours had been ignorant of the meaning of the word "Art." It had not a single fixed principle, and what unfixed principles it worked upon were all wrong. It was necessary that Scott should know nothing of art. He neither cared for painting nor sculpture, and was totally incapable of forming a judgment about them. He had some confused love of Gothic architecture, because it was dark, picturesque, old, and like nature; but could not tell the worst from the best, and built for himself perhaps the most incongruous and ugly pile that gentlemanly modernism ever designed; marking, in the most curious and subtle way, that mingling of reverence with irreverence which is so striking in the age; he reverences Melrose, yet casts one of its piscinas, puts a modern steel grate into it, and makes it his fireplace. Like all pure moderns, he supposes the Gothic barbarous, notwithstanding his love of it; admires, in an equally ignorant way, totally opposite styles; is delighted with the new town of Edinburgh; mistakes its dulness for purity of taste, and actually compares it, in its deathful formality of street, as

contrasted with the rudeness of the old town, to Britomart taking off her armor.

§ 34. Again: as in reverence and irreverence, so in levity and melancholy, we saw that the spirit of the age was strangely interwoven. Therefore, also, it is necessary that Scott should be light, careless, unearnest, and yet eminently sorrowful. Throughout all his work there is no evidence of any purpose but to while away the hour. His life had no other object than the pleasure of the instant, and the establishing of a family name. All his thoughts were, in their outcome and end, less than nothing, and vanity. And yet, of all poetry that I know, none is so sorrowful as Scott's. Other great masters are pathetic in a resolute and predetermined way, when they choose; but, in their own minds, are evidently stern, or hopeful, or serene; never really melancholy. Even Byron is rather sulky and desperate than melancholy; Keats is sad because he is sickly; Shelley because he is impious; but Scott is inherently and consistently sad. Around all his power, and brightness, and enjoyment of eye and heart, the far-away Æolian knell is for ever sounding; there is not one of those loving or laughing glances of his but it is brighter for the film of tears; his mind is like one of his own hill rivers,—it is white, and flashes in the sun fairly, careless, as it seems, and hasty in its going, but

> "Far beneath, where slow they creep
> From pool to eddy, dark and deep,
> Where alders moist, and willows weep,
> You hear her streams repine."

Life begins to pass from him very early; and while Homer sings cheerfully in his blindness, and Dante retains his courage, and rejoices in hope of Paradise, through all his exile, Scott, yet hardly past his youth, lies pensive in the sweet sunshine and among the harvest of his native hills.

> "Blackford, on whose uncultured breast,
> Among the broom, and thorn, and whin,
> A truant boy, I sought the nest,
> Or listed as I lay at rest,
> While rose on breezes thin
> The murmur of the city crowd,
> And, from his steeple jangling loud,
> St. Giles's mingling din!

Now, from the summit to the plain,
Waves all the hill with yellow grain;
And on the landscape as I look,
Nought do I see unchanged remain,
Save the rude cliffs and chiming brook;
To me they make a heavy moan
Of early friendships past and gone."

§ 35. Such, then, being the weaknesses which it was necessary that Scott should share with his age, in order that he might sufficiently represent it, and such the grounds for supposing him, in spite of all these weaknesses, the greatest literary man whom that age produced, let us glance at the principal points in which his view of landscape differs from that of the mediævals.

I shall not endeavor now, as I did with Homer and Dante, to give a complete analysis of all the feelings which appear to be traceable in Scott's allusions to landscape scenery,—for this would require a volume,—but only to indicate the main points of differing character between his temper and Dante's. Then we will examine in detail, not the landscape of literature, but that of painting, which must, of course, be equally, or even in a higher degree, characteristic of the age.

§ 36. And, first, observe Scott's habit of looking at nature neither as dead, or merely material, in the way that Homer regards it, nor as altered by his own feelings, in the way that Keats and Tennyson regard it, but as having an animation and pathos of *its own*, wholly irrespective of human presence or passion,—an animation which Scott loves and sympathizes with, as he would with a fellow creature, forgetting himself altogether, and subduing his own humanity before what seems to him the power of the landscape.

"Yon lonely thorn,—would he could tell
The changes of his parent dell,
Since he, so grey and stubborn now,
Waved in each breeze a sapling bough!
Would he could tell, how deep the shade
A thousand mingled branches made,
How broad the shadows of the oak,
How clung the rowan to the rock,
And through the foliage showed his head,
With narrow leaves and berries red!"

Scott does not dwell on the grey stubbornness of the thorn, because he himself is at that moment disposed to be dull, or stubborn; neither on the cheerful peeping forth of the rowan, because he himself is that moment cheerful or curious: but he perceives them both with the kind of interest that he would take in an old man, or a climbing boy; forgetting himself, in sympathy with either age or youth.

> "And from the grassy slope he sees
> The Greta flow to meet the Tees,
> Where issuing from her darksome bed,
> She caught the morning's eastern red,
> And through the softening vale below
> Rolled her bright waves in rosy glow,
> All blushing to her bridal bed,
> Like some shy maid, in convent bred;
> While linnet, lark, and blackbird gay
> Sing forth her nuptial roundelay."

Is Scott, or are the persons of his story, gay at this moment? Far from it. Neither Scott nor Risingham are happy, but the Greta is; and all Scott's sympathy is ready for the Greta, on the instant.

§ 37. Observe, therefore, this is not *pathetic* fallacy; for there is no passion in *Scott* which alters nature. It is not the lover's passion, making him think the larkspurs are listening for his lady's foot; it is not the miser's passion, making him think that dead leaves are falling coins; but it is an inherent and continual habit of thought, which Scott shares with the moderns in general, being, in fact, nothing else than the instinctive sense which men must have of the Divine presence, not formed into distinct belief. In the Greek it created, as we saw, the faithfully believed gods of the elements: in Dante and the mediævals, it formed the faithfully believed angelic presence; in the modern, it creates no perfect form, does not apprehend distinctly any Divine being or operation; but only a dim, slightly credited animation in the natural object, accompanied with great interest and affection for it. This feeling is quite universal with us, only varying in depth according to the greatness of the heart that holds it; and in Scott, being more than usually intense, and accompanied with infinite affection

and quickness of sympathy, it enables him to conquer all tendencies to the pathetic fallacy, and, instead of making Nature anywise subordinate to himself, he makes himself subordinate to *her*—follows her lead simply—does not venture to bring his own cares and thoughts into her pure and quiet presence—paints her in her simple and universal truth, adding no result of momentary passion or fancy, and appears, therefore, at first shallower than other poets, being in reality wider and healthier. "What am I?" he says continually, "that I should trouble this sincere nature with my thoughts. I happen to be feverish and depressed, and I could see a great many sad and strange things in those waves and flowers; but I have no business to see such things. Gay Greta! sweet harebells! *you* are not sad nor strange to most people; you are but bright water and blue blossoms; you shall not be anything else to me, except that I cannot help thinking you are a little alive,—no one can help thinking that." And thus, as Nature is bright, serene, or gloomy, Scott takes her temper, and paints her as she is; nothing of himself being ever intruded, except that far-away Eolian tone, of which he is unconscious; and sometimes a stray syllable or two, like that about Blackford Hill, distinctly stating personal feeling, but all the more modestly for that distinctness and for the clear consciousness that it is not the chiming brook, nor the cornfields, that are sad, but only the boy that rests by them; so returning on the instant to reflect, in all honesty, the image of Nature as she is meant by all to be received; nor that in fine words, but in the first that come; nor with comment of far-fetched thoughts, but with easy thoughts, such as all sensible men ought to have in such places, only spoken sweetly; and evidently also with an undercurrent of more profound reflection, which here and there murmurs for a moment, and which I think, if we choose, we may continually pierce down to, and drink deeply from, but which Scott leaves us to seek, or shun, at our pleasure.

§ 38. And in consequence of this unselfishness and humility, Scott's enjoyment of Nature is incomparably greater than that of any other poet I know. All the rest carry their cares to her, and begin maundering in her ears about their own affairs. Tennyson goes out on a furzy common, and sees it is

calm autumn sunshine, but it gives him no pleasure. He only remembers that it is

> "Dead calm in that noble breast
> Which heaves but with the heaving deep."

He sees a thundercloud in the evening, and *would* have "doted and pored" on it, but cannot, for fear it should bring the ship bad weather. Keats drinks the beauty of Nature violently; but has no more real sympathy with her than he has with a bottle of claret. His palate is fine; but he "bursts joy's grape against it," gets nothing but misery, and a bitter taste of dregs out of his desperate draught.

Byron and Shelley are nearly the same, only with less truth of perception, and even more troublesome selfishness. Wordsworth is more like Scott, and understands how to be happy, but yet cannot altogether rid himself of the sense that he is a philosopher, and ought always to be saying something wise. He has also a vague notion that Nature would not be able to get on well without Wordsworth; and finds a considerable part of his pleasure in looking at himself as well as at her. But with Scott the love is entirely humble and unselfish. "I, Scott, am nothing, and less than nothing; but these crags, and heaths, and clouds, how great they are, how lovely, how for ever to be beloved, only for their own silent, thoughtless sake!"

§ 39. This pure passion for nature in its abstract being, is still increased in its intensity by the two elements above taken notice of,—the love of antiquity, and the love of color and beautiful form, mortified in our streets, and seeking for food in the wilderness and the ruin: both feelings, observe, instinctive in Scott from his childhood, as everything that makes a man great is always.

> "And well the lonely infant knew
> Recesses where the wallflower grew,
> And honeysuckle loved to crawl
> Up the long crag and ruined wall.
> I deemed such nooks the sweetest shade
> The sun in all its round surveyed."

Not that these could have been instinctive in a child in the Middle Ages. The sentiments of a people increase or diminish

in intensity from generation to generation,—every disposition of the parents affecting the frame of the mind in their offspring: the soldier's child is born to be yet more a soldier, and the politician's to be still more a politician; even the slightest colors of sentiment and affection are transmitted to the heirs of life; and the crowning expression of the mind of a people is given when some infant of highest capacity, and sealed with the impress of this national character, is born where providential circumstances permit the full development of the powers it has received straight from Heaven, and the passions which it has inherited from its fathers.

§ 40. This love of ancientness, and that of natural beauty, associate themselves also in Scott with the love of liberty, which was indeed at the root even of all his Jacobite tendencies in politics. For, putting aside certain predilections about landed property, and family name, and "gentlemanliness" in the club sense of the word,—respecting which I do not now inquire whether they were weak or wise,—the main element which makes Scott like Cavaliers better than Puritans is, that he thinks the former *free* and *masterful* as well as loyal; and the latter *formal* and *slavish*. He is loyal, not so much in respect for law, as in unselfish love for the king; and his sympathy is quite as ready for any active borderer who breaks the law, or fights the king, in what Scott thinks a generous way, as for the king himself. Rebellion of a rough, free, and bold kind he is always delighted by; he only objects to rebellion on principle and in form: bare-headed and open-throated treason he will abet to any extent, but shrinks from it in a peaked hat and starched collar: nay, politically, he only delights in kingship itself, because he looks upon it as the head and centre of liberty; and thinks that, keeping hold of a king's hand, one may get rid of the cramps and fences of law; and that the people may be governed by the whistle, as a Highland clan on the open hill-side, instead of being shut up into hurdled folds or hedged fields, as sheep or cattle left masterless.

§ 41. And thus nature becomes dear to Scott in a threefold way: dear to him, first, as containing those remains or memories of the past, which he cannot find in cities, and giving hope of Prætorian mound or knight's grave, in every green slope and

shade of its desolate places;—dear, secondly, in its moorland liberty, which has for him just as high a charm as the fenced garden had for the mediæval:

> 'For I was wayward, bold, and wild,
> A self-willed imp—a grandame's child;
> But, half a plague, and half a jest,
> Was still endured, beloved, caressed:
> For me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask
> The classic poet's well-conned task?
> Nay, Erskine, nay. On the wild hill
> Let the wild heathbell flourish still;
> Cherish the tulip, prune the vine;
> But freely let the woodbine twine,
> And leave untrimmed the eglantine;"

—and dear to him, finally, in that perfect beauty, denied alike in cities and in men, for which every modern heart had begun at last to thirst, and Scott's, in its freshness and power, of all men's, most earnestly.

§ 42. And in this love of beauty, observe, that (as I said we might except) the love of *color* is a leading element, his healthy mind being incapable of losing, under any modern false teaching, its joy in brilliancy of hue. Though not so subtle a colorist as Dante, which, under the circumstances of the age, he could not be, he depends quite as much upon color for his power or pleasure. And, in general, if he does not mean to say much about things, the *one* character which he will give is color, using it with the most perfect mastery and faithfulness, up to the point of possible modern perception. For instance, if he has a seastorm to paint in a single line, he does not, as a feebler poet would probably have done, use any expression about the temper or form of the waves; does not call them angry or mountainous. He is content to strike them out with two dashes of Tintoret's favorite colors:

> "*The blackening wave is edged with white;*
> To inch and rock the seamews fly."

There is no form in this. Nay, the main virtue of it is, that it gets rid of all form. The dark raging of the sea—what form has that? But out of the cloud of its darkness those lightning

flashes of the foam, coming at their terrible intervals—you need no more.

Again: where he has to describe tents mingled among oaks, he says nothing about the form of either tent or tree, but only gives the two strokes of color:

> "Thousand pavilions, *white as snow*,
> *Chequered* the borough moor below,
> Oft giving way, where still there stood
> Some relics of the old oak wood,
> That darkly huge did intervene,
> *And tamed the glaring white with green.*"

Again: of tents at Flodden:

> "Next morn the Baron climbed the tower,
> To view, afar, the Scottish power,
> Encamped on Flodden edge.
> The white pavilions made a show,
> Like remnants of the winter snow,
> Along the dusky ridge."

Again: of trees mingled with dark rocks:

> "Until, where Teith's young waters roll
> Betwixt him and a wooded knoll,
> That graced the *sable* strath with *green*,
> The chapel of St. Bride was seen."

Again: there is hardly any form, only smoke and color, in his celebrated description of Edinburgh:

> "The wandering eye could o'er it go,
> And mark the distant city glow
> With gloomy splendor red;
> For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow,
> That round her sable turrets flow,
> The morning beams were shed,
> And tinged them with a lustre proud,
> Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.
> Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,
> Where the huge castle holds its state,
> And all the steep slope down,
> Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
> Piled deep and massy, close and high,
> Mine own romantic town!

But northward far with purer blaze,
On Ochil mountains fell the rays,
And as each heathy top they kissed,
It gleamed a purple amethyst.
Yonder the shores of Fife you saw;
Here Preston Bay and Berwick Law:
And, broad between them rolled,
The gallant Frith the eye might note,
Whose islands on its bosom float,
Like emeralds chased in gold."

I do not like to spoil a fine passage by italicizing it; but observe, the only hints at form, given throughout, are in the somewhat vague words, "ridgy," "massy," "close," and "high;" the whole being still more obscured by modern mystery, in its most tangible form of smoke. But the *colors* are all definite; note the rainbow band of them—gloomy or dusky red, sable (pure black), amethyst (pure purple), green, and gold—a noble chord throughout; and then, moved doubtless less by the smoky than the amethystine part of the group,

"Fitz Eustace' heart felt closely pent,
The spur he to his charger lent,
And raised his bridle hand.
And making demivolte in air,
Cried, 'Where's the coward would not dare
To fight for such a land?'"

I need not multiply examples: the reader can easily trace for himself, through verse familiar to us all, the force of these color instincts. I will therefore add only two passages, not so completely known by heart as most of the poems in which they occur.

"'Twas silence all. He laid him down
Where purple heath profusely strown,
And throatwort, with its azure bell,
And moss and thyme his cushion swell.
There, spent with toil, he listless eyed
The course of Greta's playful tide;
Beneath her banks, now eddying dun,
Now brightly gleaming to the sun,
As, dancing over rock and stone,
In yellow light her currents shone,
Matching in hue the favorite gem
Of Albin's mountain diadem.

Then tired to watch the current play,
He turned his weary eyes away
To where the bank opposing showed
Its huge square cliffs through shaggy wood.
One, prominent above the rest,
Reared to the sun its pale grey breast;
Around its broken summit grew
The hazel rude, and sable yew;
A thousand varied lichens dyed
Its waste and weather-beaten side;
And round its rugged basis lay,
By time or thunder rent away,
Fragments, that, from its frontlet torn,
Were mantled now by verdant thorn."

§ 43. Note, first, what an exquisite chord of color is given in the succession of this passage. It begins with purple and blue; then passes to gold, or cairngorm color (topaz color); then to *pale grey*, through which the yellow passes into black; and the black, through broken dyes of lichen, into green. Note, secondly,—what is indeed so manifest throughout Scott's landscape as hardly to need pointing out,—the love of rocks, and true understanding of their colors and characters, opposed as it is in every conceivable way to Dante's hatred and misunderstanding of them.

I have already traced, in various places, most of the causes of this great difference: namely, first, the ruggedness of northern temper (compare § 8. of the chapter on the Nature of Gothic in the Stones of Venice); then the really greater beauty of the northern rocks, as noted when we were speaking of the Apennine limestone; then the need of finding beauty among them, if it were to be found anywhere,—no well-arranged colors being any more to be seen in dress, but only in rock lichens; and, finally, the love of irregularity, liberty, and power, springing up in glorious opposition to laws of prosody, fashion, and the five orders.

§ 44. The other passage I have to quote is still more interesting; because it has *no form* in it *at all* except in one word (chalice), but wholly composes its imagery either of color, or of that delicate half-believed life which we have seen to be so important an element in modern landscape.

"The summer dawn's reflected hue
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue;
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kissed the lake; just stirred the trees;
And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled, but dimpled not, for joy;
The mountain-shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
The water-lily to the light
Her chalice reared of silver bright:
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
Begemmed with dew-drops, led her fawn;
The grey mist left the mountain side;
The torrent showed its glistening pride;
Invisible in flecked sky,
The lark sent down her revelry;
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;
In answer cooed the cushat dove
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love."

Two more considerations are, however, suggested by the above passage. The first, that the love of natural history, excited by the continual attention now given to all wild landscape, heightens reciprocally the interest of that landscape, and becomes an important element in Scott's description, leading him to finish, down to the minutest speckling of breast, and slightest shade of attributed emotion, the portraiture of birds and animals; in strange opposition to Homer's slightly named "sea-crows, who have care of the works of the sea," and Dante's singing-birds, of undefined species. Compare carefully a passage, too long to be quoted,—the 2nd and 3rd stanzas of canto VI. of Rokeby.

§ 45. The second, and the last point I have to note, is Scott's habit of drawing a slight *moral* from every scene, just enough to excuse to his conscience his want of definite religious feeling; and that this slight moral is almost always melancholy. Here he has stopped short without entirely expressing it—

"The mountain shadows
. . . . . lie
Like future joys to Fancy's eye."

His completed thought would be, that those future joys, like the mountain shadows, were never to be attained. It occurs fully uttered in many other places. He seems to have been constantly rebuking his own worldly pride and vanity, but never purposefully :

> "The foam-globes on her eddies ride,
> Thick as the schemes of human pride
> That down life's current drive amain,
> As frail, as frothy, and as vain."

> "Foxglove, and nightshade, side by side,
> Emblems of punishment and pride."

> "Her dark eye flashed ; she paused and sighed ;—
> 'Ah, what have I to do with pride ! '"

And hear the thought he gathers from the sunset (noting first the Turnerian color,—as usual, its principal element) :

> "The sultry summer day is done.
> The western hills have hid the sun,
> But mountain peak and village spire
> Retain reflection of his fire.
> Old Barnard's towers are purple still,
> To those that gaze from Toller Hill ;
> Distant and high the tower of Bowes
> Like steel upon the anvil glows ;
> And Stanmore's ridge, behind that lay,
> Rich with the spoils of parting day,
> In crimson and in gold arrayed,
> Streaks yet awhile the closing shade ;
> Then slow resigns to darkening heaven
> The tints which brighter hours had given
> Thus, aged men, full loth and slow,
> The vanities of life forego,
> And count their youthful follies o'er
> Till Memory lends her light no more."

That is, as far as I remember, one of the most finished pieces of sunset he has given ; and it has a woful moral ; yet one which, with Scott, is inseparable from the scene.

Hark, again :

> "'Twere sweet to mark the setting day
> On Bourhope's lonely top decay ;

And, as it faint and feeble died
On the broad lake and mountain's side,
To say, 'Thus pleasures fade away;
Youth, talents, beauty, thus decay,
And leave us dark, forlorn, and grey.'"

And again, hear Bertram:

"Mine be the eve of tropic sun:
With disk like battle target red,
He rushes to his burning bed,
Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
Then sinks at once; and all is night."

In all places of this kind, where a passing thought is suggested by some external scene, that thought is at once a slight and sad one. Scott's deeper moral sense is marked in the *conduct* of his stories, and in casual reflections or exclamations arising out of their plot, and therefore sincerely uttered; as that of Marmion:

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive!"

But the reflections which are founded, not on events, but on scenes, are, for the most part, shallow, partly insincere, and, as far as sincere, sorrowful. This habit of ineffective dreaming and moralizing over passing scenes, of which the earliest type I know is given in Jaques, is, as aforesaid, usually the satisfaction made to our modern consciences for the want of a sincere acknowledgment of God in nature: and Shakspere has marked it as the characteristic of a mind "compact of jars" (Act II. Sc. VII., As You Like It). That description attaches but too accurately to all the moods which we have traced in the moderns generally, and in Scott as the first representative of them; and the question now is, what this love of landscape, so composed, is likely to lead us to, and what use can be made of it.

We began our investigation, it will be remembered, in order to determine whether landscape-painting was worth studying or not. We have now reviewed the three principal phases of temper in the civilized human race, and we find that landscape has been mostly disregarded by great men, or cast into a second place, until now; and that now it seems dear to us, partly in

consequence of our faults, and partly owing to accidental circumstances, soon, in all likelihood, to pass away: and there seems great room for question still, whether our love of it is a permanent and healthy feeling, or only a healthy crisis in a generally diseased state of mind. If the former, society will for ever hereafter be affected by its results; and Turner, the first great landscape painter, must take a place in the history of nations corresponding in art accurately to that of Bacon in philosophy;—Bacon having first opened the study of the laws of material nature, when, formerly, men had thought only of the laws of human mind; and Turner having first opened the study of the aspect of material nature, when, before, men had thought only of the aspect of the human form. Whether, therefore, the love of landscape be trivial and transient, or important and permanent, it now becomes necessary to consider. We have, I think, data enough before us for the solution of the question, and we will enter upon it, accordingly, in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MORAL OF LANDSCAPE.

§ 1. SUPPOSING then the preceding conclusions correct, respecting the grounds and component *elements* of the pleasure which the moderns take in landscape, we have here to consider what are the probable or usual *effects* of this pleasure. Is it a safe or a seductive one? May we wisely boast of it, and unhesitatingly indulge it? or is it rather a sentiment to be despised when it is slight, and condemned when it is intense; a feeling which disinclines us to labor, and confuses us in thought; a joy only to the inactive and the visionary, incompatible with the duties of life, and the accuracies of reflection?

§ 2. It seems to me that, as matters stand at present, there is considerable ground for the latter opinion. We saw, in the preceding chapter, that our love of nature had been partly forced upon us by mistakes in our social economy, and led to no distinct issues of action or thought. And when we look to Scott—the man who feels it most deeply—for some explanation of its effect upon him, we find a curious tone of apology (as if for involuntary folly) running through his confessions of such sentiment, and a still more curious inability to define, beyond a certain point, the character of this emotion. He has lost the company of his friends among the hills, and turns to these last for comfort. He says, "there is a pleasure in the pain" consisting in such thoughts

> "As oft awake
> By lone St. Mary's silent lake;"

but, when we look for some definition of these thoughts, all that we are told is, that they compose

> "A mingled sentiment
> Of resignation and content!" *

* Marmion, Introduction to canto II.

a sentiment which, I suppose, many people can attain to on the loss of their friends, without the help of lakes or mountains; while Wordsworth definitely and positively affirms that *thought* has nothing whatever to do with the matter, and that though, in his youth, the cataract and wood "haunted him like a passion," it was without the help of any "remoter charm, by thought supplied."

§ 3. There is not, however, any question, but that both Scott and Wordsworth are here mistaken in their analysis of their feelings. Their delight, so far from being without thought, is more than half made up of thought, but of thought in so curiously languid and neutralized a condition that they cannot trace it. The thoughts are beaten to a powder so small that they know not what they are; they know only that in such a state they are not good for much, and disdain to call them thoughts. But the way in which thought, even thus broken, acts in producing the delight will be understood by glancing back to §§ 9. and 10. of the tenth chapter, in which we observed the power of the imagination in exalting any visible object, by gathering round it, in farther vision, all the facts properly connected with it; this being, as it were, a spiritual or second sight, multiplying the power of enjoyment according to the fulness of the vision. For, indeed, although in all lovely nature there is, first, an excellent degree of simple beauty, addressed to the eye alone, yet often what impresses us most will form but a very small portion of that visible beauty. That beauty may, for instance, be composed of lovely flowers and glittering streams, and blue sky, and white clouds; and yet the thing that impresses us most, and which we should be sorriest to lose, may be a thin grey film on the extreme horizon, not so large, in the space of the scene it occupies, as a piece of gossamer on a near at hand bush, nor in any wise prettier to the eye than the gossamer; but, because the gossamer is known by us for a little bit of spider's work, and the other grey film is known to mean a mountain ten thousand feet high, inhabited by a race of noble mountaineers, we are solemnly impressed by the aspect of it; and yet, all the while the thoughts and knowledge which cause us to receive this impression are so obscure that we are not conscious of them; we think we are only enjoying the visible scene;

and the very men whose minds are fullest of such thoughts absolutely deny, as we have just heard, that they owe their pleasure to anything but the eye, or that the pleasure consists in anything else than "Tranquillity."

§ 4. And observe, farther, that this comparative Dimness and Untraceableness of the thoughts which are the sources of our admiration, is not a *fault* in the thoughts, at such a time. It is, on the contrary, a necessary condition of their subordination to the pleasure of Sight. If the thoughts were more distinct we should not *see* so well; and beginning definitely to think, we must comparatively cease to see. In the instance just supposed, as long as we look at the film of mountain or Alp, with only an obscure consciousness of its being the source of mighty rivers, that consciousness adds to our sense of its sublimity; and if we have ever seen the Rhine or the Rhone near their mouths, our knowledge, so long as it is only obscurely suggested, adds to our admiration of the Alp; but once let the idea define itself,—once let us begin to consider seriously *what* rivers flow from that mountain, to trace their course, and to recall determinately our memories of their distant aspects,—and we cease to behold the Alp; or, if we still behold it, it is only as a point in a map which we are painfully designing, or as a subordinate object which we strive to thrust aside, in order to make room for our remembrances of Avignon or Rotterdam.

Again: so long as our idea of the multitudes who inhabit the ravines at its foot remains indistinct, that idea comes to the aid of all the other associations which increase our delight. But let it once arrest us, and entice us to follow out some clear course of thought respecting the causes of the prosperity or misfortune of the Alpine villagers, and the snowy peak again ceases to be visible, or holds its place only as a white spot upon the retina, while we pursue our meditations upon the religion or the political economy of the mountaineers.

§ 5. It is thus evident that a curiously balanced condition of the powers of mind is necessary to induce full admiration of any natural scene. Let those powers be themselves inert, and the mind vacant of knowledge, and destitute of sensibility, and the external object becomes little more to us than it is to birds or insects; we fall into the temper of the clown. On the other

hand, let the reasoning powers be shrewd in excess, the knowledge vast, or sensibility intense, and it will go hard but that the visible object will suggest so much that it shall be soon itself forgotten, or become, at the utmost, merely a kind of key-note to the course of purposeful thought. Newton, probably, did not perceive whether the apple which suggested his meditations on gravity was withered or rosy; nor could Howard be affected by the picturesqueness of the architecture which held the sufferers it was his occupation to relieve.

§ 6. This wandering away in thought from the thing seen to the business of life, is not, however, peculiar to men of the highest reasoning powers, or most active benevolence. It takes place more or less in nearly all persons of average mental endowment. They see and love what is beautiful, but forget their admiration of it in following some train of thought which it suggested, and which is of more personal interest to them. Suppose that three or four persons come in sight of a group of pine-trees, not having seen pines for some time. One, perhaps an engineer, is struck by the manner in which their roots hold the ground, and sets himself to examine their fibres, in a few minutes retaining little more consciousness of the beauty of the trees than if he were a rope-maker untwisting the strands of a cable: to another, the sight of the trees calls up some happy association, and presently he forgets them, and pursues the memories they summoned: a third is struck by certain groupings of their colors, useful to him as an artist, which he proceeds immediately to note mechanically for future use, with as little feeling as a cook setting down the constituents of a newly discovered dish; and a fourth, impressed by the wild coiling of boughs and roots, will begin to change them in his fancy into dragons and monsters, and lose his grasp of the scene in fantastic metamorphosis: while, in the mind of the man who has most the power of contemplating the thing itself, all these perceptions and trains of idea are partially present, not distinctly, but in a mingled and perfect harmony. He will not see the colors of the tree so well as the artist, nor its fibres so well as the engineer; he will not altogether share the emotion of the sentimentalist, nor the trance of the idealist; but fancy, and feeling, and perception, and imagination, will all obscurely meet and balance

themselves in him, and he will see the pine-trees somewhat in this manner:

> "Worthier still of note
> Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
> Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
> Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth
> Of intertwisted fibres serpentine
> Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;
> Nor uniformed with Phantasy, and looks
> That threaten the profane; a pillared shade,
> Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
> By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
> Perennially,—beneath whose sable roof
> Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
> With unrejoicing berries, ghostly Shapes
> May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,
> Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton,
> And Time the Shadow; there to celebrate,
> As in a natural temple scattered o'er
> With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
> United worship."

§ 7. The power, therefore, of thus fully *perceiving* any natural object depends on our being able to group and fasten all our fancies about it as a centre, making a garland of thoughts for it, in which each separate thought is subdued and shortened of its own strength, in order to fit it for harmony with others; the intensity of our enjoyment of the object depending, first, on its own beauty, and then on the richness of the garland. And men who have this habit of clustering and harmonizing their thoughts are a little too apt to look scornfully upon the harder workers who tear the bouquet to pieces to examine the stems. This was the chief narrowness of Wordsworth's mind; he could not understand that to break a rock with a hammer in search of crystal may sometimes be an act not disgraceful to human nature, and that to dissect a flower may sometimes be as proper as to dream over it; whereas all experience goes to teach us, that among men of average intellect the most useful members of society are the dissectors, not the dreamers. It is not that they love nature or beauty less, but that they love result, effect, and progress more; and when we glance broadly along the starry crowd of benefactors to the human race, and guides of human

thought, we shall find that this dreaming love of natural beauty —or at least its expression—has been more or less checked by them all, and subordinated either to hard work or watching of *human* nature. Thus in all the classical and mediæval periods, it was, as we have seen, subordinate to agriculture, war, and religion; and in the modern period, in which it has become far more powerful, observe in what persons it is chiefly manifested.

(1.) It is subordinate in	(2.) It is intense in
Bacon.	Mrs. Radclyffe.
Milton.	St. Pierre.
Johnson.	Shenstone.
Richardson.	Byron.
Goldsmith.	Shelley.
Young.	Keats.
Newton.	Burns.
Howard.	Eugene Sue.
Fenelon.	George Sand.
Pascal.	Dumas.

§ 8. I have purposely omitted the names of Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Scott, in the second list, because, glancing at the two columns as they now stand, we may, I think, draw some useful conclusions from the high honorableness and dignity of the names on one side, and the comparative slightness of those on the other,—conclusions which may help us to a better understanding of Scott and Tennyson themselves. Glancing, I say, down those columns in their present form, we shall at once perceive that the intense love of nature is, in modern times, characteristic of persons not of the first order of intellect, but of brilliant imagination, quick sympathy, and undefined religious principle, suffering also usually under strong and ill-governed passions: while in the same individual it will be found to vary at different periods, being, for the most part, strongest in youth, and associated with force of emotion, and with indefinite and feeble powers of thought; also, throughout life, perhaps developing itself most at times when the mind is slightly unhinged by love, grief, or some other of the passions.

§ 9. But, on the other hand, while these feelings of delight in natural objects cannot be construed into signs of the highest

mental powers, or purest moral principles, we see that they are assuredly indicative of minds above the usual standard of power, and endowed with sensibilities of great preciousness to humanity; so that those who find themselves entirely destitute of them, must make this want a subject of humiliation, not of pride. The apathy which cannot perceive beauty is very different from the stern energy which disdains it; and the coldness of heart which receives no emotion from external nature, is not to be confounded with the wisdom of purpose which represses emotion in action. In the case of most men, it is neither acuteness of the reason, nor breadth of humanity, which shields them from the impressions of natural scenery, but rather low anxieties, vain discontents, and mean pleasures; and for one who is blinded to the works of God by profound abstraction or lofty purpose, tens of thousands have their eyes sealed by vulgar selfishness, and their intelligence crushed by impious care.

Observe, then: we have, among mankind in general, the three orders of being;—the lowest, sordid and selfish, which neither sees nor feels; the second, noble and sympathetic, but which sees and feels without concluding or acting; the third and highest, which loses sight in resolution, and feeling in work.*

* The investigation of this subject becomes, therefore, difficult beyond all other parts of our inquiry, since precisely the same sentiments may arise in different minds from totally opposite causes; and the extreme of frivolity may sometimes for a moment desire the same things as the extreme of moral power and dignity. In the following extract from "Marriage," the sentiment expressed by Lady Juliana (the ineffably foolish and frivolous heroine of the story) is as nearly as possible what Dante would have felt, under the same circumstances:

"The air was soft and genial; not a cloud stained the bright azure of the heavens; and the sun shone out in all his splendor, shedding life and beauty even over the desolate heath-clad hills of Glenfern. But, after they had journeyed a few miles, suddenly emerging from the valley, a scene of matchless beauty burst at once upon the eye. Before them lay the dark blue waters of Lochmarlie, reflecting, as in a mirror, every surrounding object, and bearing on its placid, transparent bosom a fleet of herring-boats, the drapery of whose black, suspended nets contrasted, with picturesque effect, the white sails of the larger vessels, which were vainly spread to catch a breeze. All around, rocks, meadows, woods, and hills mingled in wild and lovely irregularity.

Thus, even in Scott and Wordsworth themselves, the love of nature is more or less associated with their weaknesses. Scott shows it most in the cruder compositions of his youth, his perfect powers of mind being displayed only in dialogues with which description has nothing whatever to do. Wordsworth's distinctive work was a war with pomp and pretence, and a display of the majesty of simple feelings and humble hearts, together with high reflective truth in his analysis of the courses of politics and ways of men; without these, his love of nature would have been comparatively worthless.

§ 10. "If this be so, it is not well to encourage the observance of landscape, any more than other ways of dreamily and ineffectually spending time?"

Stay a moment. We have hitherto observed this love of natural beauty only as it distinguishes one man from another, not as it acts for good or evil on those minds to which it necessarily belongs. It may, on the whole, distinguish weaker men from stronger men, and yet in those weaker men may be of some notable use. It may distinguish Byron from St. Bernard, and Shelley from Sir Isaac Newton, and yet may, perhaps, be the best thing that Byron and Shelley possess—a saving element in them; just as a rush may be distinguished from an oak by its bending, and yet the bending may be the saving element

"Not a breath was stirring, not a sound was heard, save the rushing of a waterfall, the tinkling of some silver rivulet, or the calm rippling of the tranquil lake; now and then, at intervals, the fisherman's Gaelic ditty, chanted as he lay stretched on the sand in some sunny nook; or the shrill, distant sound of childish glee. How delicious to the feeling heart to behold so fair a scene of unsophisticated nature, and to listen to her voice alone, breathing the accents of innocence and joy! But none of the party who now gazed on it had minds capable of being touched with the emotions it was calculated to inspire.

"Henry, indeed, was rapturous in his expressions of admiration; but he concluded his panegyrics by wondering his brother did not keep a cutter, and resolving to pass a night on board one of the herring-boats, that he might eat the fish in perfection.

"Lady Juliana thought it might be very pretty, if, instead of those frightful rocks and shabby cottages, there could be villas, and gardens, and lawns, and conservatories, and summer-houses, and statues.

"Miss Bella observed, if it was hers she would cut down the woods, and level the hills, and have races."

in the rush, and an admirable gift in its place and way. So that, although St. Bernard journeys all day by the Lake of Geneva, and asks at evening "where it is," and Byron learns by it "to love earth only for its earthly sake,"* it does not follow that Byron, hating men, was the worse for loving the earth, nor that St. Bernard, loving men, was the better or wiser for being blind to it. And this will become still more manifest if we examine somewhat farther into the nature of this instinct, as characteristic especially of youth.

§ 11. We saw above that Wordsworth described the feeling as independent of thought, and, in the particular place then quoted, he *therefore* speaks of it depreciatingly. But in other places he does not speak of it depreciatingly, but seems to think the absence of thought involves a certain nobleness:

> "In such high hour
> Of visitation from the living God
> *Thought* was not."

And he refers to the intense delight which he himself felt, and which he supposes other men feel, in nature, during their thoughtless youth, as an intimation of their immortality, and a joy which indicates their having come fresh from the hand of God.

Now, if Wordsworth be right in supposing this feeling to be in some degree common to all men, and most vivid in youth, we may question if it can be *entirely* explained as I have now tried to explain it. For if it entirely depended on multitudes of ideas, clustering about a beautiful object, it might seem that the youth could not feel it so strongly as the man, because the man knows more, and must have more ideas to make the garland of. Still less can we suppose the pleasure to be of that melancholy and languid kind, which Scott defines as "Resignation" and "Content;" boys being not distinguished for either of those characters, but for eager effort and delightsome discontent. If Wordsworth is at all right in this matter, therefore, there must surely be some other element in the feeling not yet detected.

§ 12. Now, in a question of this subtle kind, relating to a

* Childe Harold, canto iii. st. 71.

period of life when self-examination is rare, and expression imperfect, it becomes exceedingly difficult to trace, with any certainty, the movements of the minds of others, nor always easy to remember those of our own. I cannot, from observation, form any decided opinion as to the extent in which this strange delight in nature influences the hearts of young persons in general; and, in stating what has passed in my own mind, I do not mean to draw any positive conclusion as to the nature of the feeling in other children; but the inquiry is clearly one in which personal experience is the only safe ground to go upon, though a narrow one; and I will make no excuse for talking about myself with reference to this subject, because, though there is much egotism in the world, it is often the last thing a man thinks of doing,—and, though there is much work to be done in the world, it is often the best thing a man can do,—to tell the exact truth about the movements of his own mind; and there is this farther reason, that, whatever other faculties I may or may not possess, this gift of taking pleasure in landscape I assuredly possess in a greater degree than most men; it having been the ruling passion of my life, and the reason for the choice of its field of labor.

§ 13. The first thing which I remember as an event in life, was being taken by my nurse to the brow of Friar's Crag on Derwentwater; the intense joy, mingled with awe, that I had in looking through the hollows in the mossy roots, over the crag, into the dark lake, has associated itself more or less with all twining roots of trees ever since. Two other things I remember, as, in a sort, beginnings of life;—crossing Shapfells (being let out of the chaise to run up the hills), and going through Glenfarg, near Kinross, in a winter's morning, when the rocks where hung with icicles; these being culminating points in an early life of more travelling than is usually indulged to a child. In such journeyings, whenever they brought me near hills, and in all mountain ground and scenery, I had a pleasure, as early as I can remember, and continuing till I was eighteen or twenty, infinitely greater than any which has been since possible to me in anything; comparable for intensity only to the joy of a lover in being near a noble and kind mistress, but no more explicable or definable than that feeling of love itself. Only thus much

I can remember, respecting it, which is important to our present subject.

§ 14. First: it was never independent of associated thought. Almost as soon as I could see or hear, I had got reading enough to give me associations with all kinds of scenery; and mountains, in particular, were always partly confused with those of my favorite book, Scott's Monastery; so that Glenfarg and all other glens were more or less enchanted to me, filled with forms of hesitating creed about Christie of the Clint Hill, and the monk Eustace; and with a general presence of White Lady everywhere. I also generally knew, or was told by my father and mother, such simple facts of history as were necessary to give more definite and justifiable association to other scenes which chiefly interested me, such as the ruins of Lochleven and Kenilworth; and thus my pleasure in mountains or ruins was never, even in earliest childhood, free from a certain awe and melancholy, and general sense of the meaning of death, though in its principal influence, entirely exhilarating and gladdening.

§ 15. Secondly: it was partly dependent on contrast with a very simple and unamused mode of general life; I was born in London, and accustomed, for two or three years, to no other prospect than that of the brick walls over the way; had no brothers, nor sisters, nor companions; and though I could always make myself happy in a quiet way, the beauty of the mountains had an additional charm of change and adventure which a country-bred child would not have felt.

§ 16. Thirdly: there was no definite religious feeling mingled with it. I partly believed in ghosts and fairies; but supposed that angels belonged entirely to the Mosaic dispensation, and cannot remember any single thought or feeling connected with them. I believed that God was in heaven, and could hear me and see me; but this gave me neither pleasure nor pain, and I seldom thought of it at all. I never thought of nature as God's work, but as a separate fact or existence.

§ 17. Fourthly: it was entirely unaccompanied by powers of reflection or invention. Every fancy that I had about nature was put into my head by some book; and I never reflected about anything till I grew older; and then, the more I reflected, the less nature was precious to me: I could then make myself hap-

py, by thinking, in the dark, or in the dullest scenery; and the beautiful scenery became less essential to my pleasure.

§ 18. Fifthly: it was, according to its strength, inconsistent with every evil feeling, with spite, anger, covetousness, discontent, and every other hateful passion; but would associate itself deeply with every just and noble sorrow, joy, or affection. It had not, however, always the power to repress what was inconsistent with it; and, though only after stout contention, might at last be crushed by what it had partly repressed. And as it only acted by setting one impulse against another, though it had much power in moulding the character, it had hardly any in strengthening it; it formed temperament, but never instilled principle; it kept me generally good-humored and kindly, but could not teach me perseverance or self-denial: what firmness or principle I had was quite independent of it; and it came itself nearly as often in the form of a temptation as of a safeguard, leading me to ramble over hills when I should have been learning lessons, and lose days in reveries which I might have spent in doing kindnesses.

§ 19. Lastly: although there was no definite religious sentiment mingled with it, there was a continual perception of Sanctity in the whole of nature, from the slightest thing to the vastest;—an instinctive awe, mixed with delight; an indefinable thrill, such as we sometimes imagine to indicate the presence of a disembodied spirit. I could only feel this perfectly when I was alone; and then it would often make me shiver from head to foot with the joy and fear of it, when after being some time away from the hills, I first got to the shore of a mountain river, where the brown water circled among the pebbles, or when I saw the first swell of distant land against the sunset, or the first low broken wall, covered with mountain moss. I cannot in the least *describe* the feeling; but I do not think this is my fault, nor that of the English language, for, I am afraid, no feeling *is* describable. If we had to explain even the sense of bodily hunger to a person who had never felt it, we should be hard put to it for words; and this joy in nature seemed to me to come of a sort of heart-hunger, satisfied with the presence of a Great and Holy Spirit. These feelings remained in their full intensity till I was eighteen or twenty, and then, as the reflective and practi-

cal power increased, and the "cares of this world" gained upon me, faded gradually away, in the manner described by Wordsworth in his Intimations of Immortality.

§ 20. I cannot, of course, tell how far I am justified in supposing that these sensations may be reasoned upon as common to children in general. In the same degree they are not of course common, otherwise children would be, most of them, very different from what they are in their choice of pleasures. But, as far as such feelings exist, I apprehend they are more or less similar in their nature and influence; only producing different characters according to the elements with which they are mingled. Thus, a very religious child may give up many pleasures to which its instincts lead it, for the sake of irksome duties; and an inventive child would mingle its love of nature with watchfulness of human sayings and doings: but I believe the feelings I have endeavored to describe are the pure landscape-instinct; and the likelihoods of good or evil resulting from them may be reasoned upon as generally indicating the usefulness or danger of the modern love and study of landscape.

§ 21. And, first, observe that the charm of romantic association (§ 14.) can be felt only by the modern European child. It rises eminently out of the contrast of the beautiful past with the frightful and monotonous present; and it depends for its force on the existence of ruins and traditions, on the remains of architecture, the traces of battlefields, and the precursorship of eventful history. The instinct to which it appeals can hardly be felt in America, and every day that either beautifies our present architecture and dress, or overthrows a stone of mediæval monument, contributes to weaken it in Europe. Of its influence on the mind of Turner and Prout, and the permanent results which, through them, it is likely to effect, I shall have to speak presently.

§ 22. Again: the influence of surprise in producing the delight, is to be noted as a suspicious or evanescent element in it. Observe, my pleasure was chiefly (§ 19.) when I *first* got into beautiful scenery, out of London. The enormous influence of novelty—the way in which it quickens observation, sharpens sensation, and exalts sentiment—is not half enough taken note of by us, and is to me a very sorrowful matter. I think that what

Wordsworth speaks of as a glory in the child, because it has come fresh from God's hands, is in reality nothing more than the freshness of all things to its newly opened sight. I find that by keeping long away from hills, I can in great part still restore the old childish feeling about them; and the more I live and work among them, the more it vanishes.

§ 23. This evil is evidently common to all minds; Wordsworth himself mourning over it in the same poem:

> "Custom hangs upon us, with a weight
> Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life."

And if we grow impatient under it, and seek to recover the mental energy by more quickly repeated and brighter novelty, it is all over with our enjoyment. There is no cure for this evil, any more than for the weariness of the imagination already described, but in patience and rest: if we try to obtain perpetual change, change itself will become monotonous; and then we are reduced to that old despair, "If water chokes, what will you drink after it?" And the two points of practical wisdom in this matter are, first, to be content with as little novelty as possible at a time; and, secondly, to preserve, as much as possible in the world, the sources of novelty.

§ 24. I say, first, to be content with as little change as possible. If the attention is awake, and the feelings in proper train, a turn of a country road, with a cottage beside it, which we have not seen before, is as much as we need for refreshment; if we hurry past it, and take two cottages at a time, it is already too much: hence, to any person who has all his senses about him, a quiet walk along not more than ten or twelve miles of road a day, is the most amusing of all travelling; and all travelling becomes dull in exact proportion to its rapidity. Going by railroad I do not consider as travelling at all; it is merely "being sent" to a place, and very little different from becoming a parcel; the next step to it would of course be telegraphic transport, of which, however, I suppose it has been truly said by Octave Feuillet,

> "*Il y aurait des gens assez bêtes* pour trouver ça amusant." *

* Scènes et Proverbes. La Crise; (Scène en calèche, hors Paris.)

If we walk more than ten or twelve miles, it breaks up the day too much; leaving no time for stopping at the stream sides or shady banks, or for any work at the end of the day; besides that the last few miles are apt to be done in a hurry, and may then be considered as lost ground. But if, advancing thus slowly, after some days we approach any more interesting scenery, every yard of the changeful ground becomes precious and piquant; and the continual increase of hope, and of surrounding beauty, affords one of the most exquisite enjoyments possible to the healthy mind; besides that real knowledge is acquired of whatever it is the object of travelling to learn, and a certain sublimity given to all places, so attained, by the true sense of the spaces of earth that separate them. A man who really loves travelling would as soon consent to pack a day of such happiness into an hour of railroad, as one who loved eating would agree, if it were possible, to concentrate his dinner into a pill.

§ 25. And, secondly, I say that it is wisdom to preserve as much as possible the innocent *sources* of novelty;—not definite inferiorities of one place to another, if such can be done away; but differences of manners and customs, of language and architecture. The greatest effort ought especially to be made by all wise and far-sighted persons, in the present crisis of civilization, to enforce the distinction between wholesome reform, and heartless abandonment of ancestral custom; between kindly fellowship of nation with nation, and ape-like adoption, by one, of the habits of another. It is ludicrously awful to see the luxurious inhabitants of London and Paris rushing over the Continent (as they say, to *see* it), and transposing every place, as far as lies in their power, instantly into a likeness of Regent Street and the Rue de la Paix, which they need not certainly have come so far to see. Of this evil I shall have more to say hereafter; meantime I return to our main subject.

§ 26. The next character we have to note in the landscape-instinct (and on this much stress is to be laid), is its total inconsistency with all evil passion; its absolute contrariety (whether in the contest it were crushed or not) to all care, hatred, envy, anxiety, and moroseness. A feeling of this kind is assuredly not one to be lightly repressed, or treated with contempt.

But how, if it be so, the reader asks, can it be characteristic of passionate and unprincipled men, like Byron, Shelley, and such others, and not characteristic of the noblest and most highly principled men?

First, because it is itself a passion, and therefore likely to be characteristic of passionate men. Secondly, because it is (§ 18) wholly a separate thing from moral principle, and may or may not be joined to strength of will, or rectitude of purpose;* only, this much is always observable in the men whom it characterizes, that, whatever their faults or failings, they always understand and love noble qualities of character; they can conceive (if not certain phases of piety), at all events, self-devotion of the highest kind; they delight in all that is good, gracious, and noble; and though warped often to take delight also in what is dark or degraded, that delight is mixed with bitter self-reproach; or else is wanton, careless, or affected, while their delight in noble things is constant and sincere.

§ 27. Look back to the two lists given above, § 7. I have not lately read anything by Mrs. Radclyffe or George Sand, and cannot, therefore, take instances from them; Keats hardly introduced human character into his work; but glance over the others, and note the general tone of their conceptions. Take St. Pierre's Virginia, Byron's Myrrha, Angiolina, and Marina, and Eugene Sue's Fleur de Marie; and out of the other lists you will only be able to find Pamela, Clementina, and, I suppose, Clarissa,† to put beside them; and these will not more than match Myrrha and Marina; leaving Fleur de Marie and

* Compare the characters of Fleur de Marie and Rigolette, in the Mystères de Paris. I know no other instance in which the two tempers are so exquisitely delineated and opposed. Read carefully the beautiful pastoral, in the eighth chapter of the first Part, where Fleur de Marie is first taken into the fields under Montmartre, and compare it with the sixth of the second Part, its accurately traced companion sketch, noting carefully Rigolette's "Non, *je déteste la campagne.*" She does not, however, dislike flowers or birds: "Cette caisse de bois, que Rigolette appellait le jardin de ses oiseaux, était remplie de terre recouverte de mousse, pendant l'hiver. Elle travaillait auprès de la fenêtre ouverte, à-demi-voilée par un verdoyant rideau de pois de senteur roses, de capucines oranges, de volubilis bleus et blancs."

† I have not read Clarissa.

Virginia rivalless. Then meditate a little, with all justice and mercy, over the two groups of names; and I think you will, at last, feel that there is a pathos and tenderness of heart among the lovers of nature in the second list, of which it is nearly impossible to estimate either the value or the danger; that the sterner consistency of the men in the first may, in great part, have arisen only from the, to them, most merciful, appointment of having had religious teaching or disciplined education in their youth; while their want of love for nature, whether that love be originally absent, or artificially repressed, is to none of them an advantage. Johnson's indolence, Goldsmith's improvidence, Young's worldliness, Milton's severity, and Bacon's servility, might all have been less, if they could in any wise have sympathized with Byron's lonely joy in a Jura storm,* or with Shelley's interest in floating paper boats down the Serchio.

§ 28. And then observe, farther, as I kept the names of Wordsworth and Scott out of the second list, I withdrew, also, certain names from the first; and for this reason, that in all the men who are named in that list, there is evidently *some* degree of love for nature, which may have been originally of more power than we suppose, and may have had an infinitely hallowing and protective influence upon them. But there also lived certain men of high intellect in that age who had *no* love of nature whatever. They do not appear ever to have received the smallest sensation of ocular delight from any natural scene, but would have lived happily all their lives in drawing-rooms or studies. And, therefore, in these men we shall be able to determine, with the greatest chance of accuracy, what the real influence of natural beauty is, and what the character of a mind destitute of its love. Take, as conspicuous instances, Le Sage and Smollett, and you will find, in meditating over their works, that they are utterly incapable of conceiving a human soul as endowed with any nobleness whatever; their heroes are simply beasts endowed with some degree of human intellect;—

* It might be thought that Young *could* have sympathized with it. He would have made better use of it, but he would not have had the same delight in it. He turns his solitude to good account; but this is because, to him, solitude is sorrow, and his real enjoyment would have been of amiable society, and a place at court.

cunning, false, passionate, reckless, ungrateful, and abominable, incapable of noble joy, of noble sorrow, of any spiritual perception or hope. I said, "beasts with human intellect;" but neither Gil Blas nor Roderick Random reach, morally, anything near the level of dogs; while the delight which the writers themselves feel in mere filth and pain, with an unmitigated foulness and cruelty of heart, is just as manifest in every sentence as the distress and indignation which with pain and injustice are seen by Shelley and Byron.

§ 29. Distinguished from these men by *some* evidence of love for nature, yet an evidence much less clear than that for any of those named even in the first list, stand Cervantes, Pope, and Molière. It is not easy to say how much the character of these last depended on their epoch and education; but it is noticeable that the first two agree thus far in temper with Le Sage and Smollett,—that they delight in dwelling upon vice, misfortune, or folly, as subjects of amusement; while yet they are distinguished from Le Sage and Smollett by capacity of conceiving nobleness of character, only in a humiliating and hopeless way; the one representing all chivalry as insanity, the other placing the wisdom of man in a serene and sneering reconciliation of good with evil. Of Molière I think very differently. Living in the blindest period of the world's history, in the most luxurious city, and the most corrupted court, of the time, he yet manifests through all his writings an exquisite natural wisdom; a capacity for the most simple enjoyment; a high sense of all nobleness, honor, and purity, variously marked throughout his slighter work, but distinctly made the theme of his two perfect plays—the Tartuffe and Misanthrope; and in all that he says of art or science he has an unerring instinct for what is useful and sincere, and uses his whole power to defend it, with as keen a hatred of everything affected and vain. And, singular as it may seem, the first definite lesson read to Europe, in that school of simplicity of which Wordsworth was the supposed originator among the mountains of Cumberland, was, in fact, given in the midst of the court of Louis XIV., and by Molière. The little canzonet, "J'aime mieux ma mie," is, I believe, the first Wordsworthian poem

brought forward on philosophical principles to oppose the schools of art and affectation.

§ 30. I do not know if, by a careful analysis, I could point out any evidences of a capacity for the love of natural scenery in Molière stealing forth through the slightness of his pastorals; but, if not, we must simply set him aside as exceptional, as a man uniting Wordsworth's philosophy with Le Sage's wit, turned by circumstances from the observance of natural beauty to that of human frailty. And thus putting him aside for the moment, I think we cannot doubt of our main conclusion, that, though the absence of the love of nature is not an assured condemnation, its presence is an invariable sign of goodness of heart and justness of moral *perception*, though by no means of moral *practice;* that in proportion to the degree in which it is felt, will *probably* be the degree in which all nobleness and beauty of character will also be felt; that when it is originally absent from any mind, that mind is in many other respects hard, worldly, and degraded; that where, having been originally present, it is repressed by art or education, that repression appears to have been detrimental to the person suffering it; and that wherever the feeling exists, it acts for good on the character to which it belongs, though, as it may often belong to characters weak in other respects, it may carelessly be mistaken for a source of evil in them.

§ 31. And having arrived at this conclusion by a review of facts, which I hope it will be admitted, whether accurate or not, has at least been candid, these farther considerations may confirm our belief in its truth. Observe: the whole force of education, until very lately, has been directed in every possible way to the destruction of the love of nature. The only knowledge which has been considered essential among us is that of words, and, next after it, of the abstract sciences; while every liking shown by children for simple natural history has been either violently checked, (if it took an inconvenient form for the housemaids,) or else scrupulously limited to hours of play: so that it has really been impossible for any child earnestly to study the works of God but against its conscience; and the love of nature has become inherently the characteristic of truants and idlers. While also the art of drawing, which is of

more real importance to the human race than that of writing (because people can hardly draw anything without being of some use both to themselves and others, and can hardly write anything without wasting their own time and that of others),—this art of drawing, I say, which on plain and stern system should be taught to every child, just as writing is,—has been so neglected and abused, that there is not one man in a thousand, even of its professed teachers, who knows its first principles: and thus it needs much ill-fortune or obstinacy—much neglect on the part of his teachers, or rebellion on his own—before a boy can get leave to use his eyes or his fingers; so that those who *can* use them are for the most part neglected or rebellious lads—runaways and bad scholars—passionate, erratic, self-willed, and restive against all forms of education; while your well-behaved and amiable scholars are disciplined into blindness and palsy of half their faculties. Wherein there is at once a notable ground for what difference we have observed between the lovers of nature and its despisers; between the somewhat immoral and unrespectable watchfulness of the one, and the moral and respectable blindness of the other.

§ 32. One more argument remains, and that, I believe, an unanswerable one. As, by the accident of education, the love of nature has been, among us, associated with *wilfulness*, so, by the accident of time, it has been associated with *faithlessness*. I traced, above, the peculiar mode in which this faithlessness was indicated; but I never intended to imply, therefore, that it was an invariable concomitant of the love. Because it happens that, by various concurrent operations of evil, we have been led, according to those words of the Greek poet already quoted, "to dethrone the gods, and crown the whirlwind," it is no reason that we should forget there was once a time when "the Lord answered Job *out of* the whirlwind." And if we now take final and full view of the matter, we shall find that the love of nature, wherever it has existed, has been a faithful and sacred element of human feeling; that is to say, supposing all circumstances otherwise the same with respect to two individuals, the one who loves nature most will be *always* found to have more *faith in God* than the other. It is intensely difficult, owing to the confusing and counter influences which always

mingle in the data of the problem, to make this abstraction fairly; but so far as we can do it, so far, I boldly assert, the result is constantly the same: the nature-worship will be found to bring with it such a sense of the presence and power of a Great Spirit as no mere reasoning can either induce or controvert; and where that nature-worship is innocently pursued,—i.e. with due respect to other claims on time, feeling, and exertion, and associated with the higher principles of religion,—it becomes the channel of certain sacred truths, which by no other means can be conveyed.

§ 33. This is not a statement which any investigation is needed to prove. It comes to us at once from the highest of all authority. The greater number of the words which are recorded in Scripture, as directly spoken to men by the lips of the Deity, are either simple revelations of His law, or special threatenings, commands, and promises relating to special events. But two passages of God's speaking, one in the Old and one in the New Testament, possess, it seems to me, a different character from any of the rest, having been uttered, the one to effect the last necessary change in the mind of a man whose piety was in other respects perfect; and the other, as the first statement to all men of the principles of Christianity by Christ Himself—I mean the 38th to 41st chapters of the book of Job, and the Sermon on the Mount. Now the first of these passages is, from beginning to end, nothing else than a direction of the mind which was to be perfected to humble observance of the works of God in nature. And the other consists only in the inculcation of *three* things: 1st, right conduct; 2nd, looking for eternal life; 3rd, trusting God, through watchfulness of His dealings with His creation: and the entire contents of the book of Job, and of the Sermon on the Mount, will be found resolvable simply into these three requirements from all men,—that they should act rightly, hope for heaven, and watch God's wonders and work in the earth; the right conduct being always summed up under the three heads of *justice*, *mercy*, and *truth*, and no mention of any doctrinal point whatsoever occurring in either piece of divine teaching.

§ 34. As far as I can judge of the ways of men, it seems to me that the simplest and most necessary truths are always the

last believed; and I suppose that well-meaning people in general would rather regulate their conduct and creed by almost any other portion of Scripture whatsoever, than by that Sermon on the Mount, which contains the things that Christ thought it first necessary for all men to understand. Nevertheless, I believe the time will soon come for the full force of these two passages of Scripture to be accepted. Instead of supposing the love of nature necessarily connected with the faithlessness of the age, I believe it is connected properly with the benevolence and liberty of the age; that it is precisely the most healthy element which distinctively belongs to us; and that out of it, cultivated no longer in levity or ignorance, but in earnestness and as a duty, results will spring of an importance at present inconceivable; and lights arise, which, for the first time in man's history, will reveal to him the true nature of his life, the true field for his energies, and the true relations between him and his Maker.

§ 35. I will not endeavor here to trace the various modes in which these results are likely to be effected, for this would involve an essay on education, on the uses of natural history, and the probable future destiny of nations. Somewhat on these subjects I have spoken in other places; and I hope to find time, and proper place, to say more. But one or two observations may be made merely to suggest the directions in which the reader may follow out the subject for himself.

The great mechanical impulses of the age, of which most of us are so proud, are a mere passing fever, half-speculative, half-childish. People will discover at last that royal roads to anything can no more be laid in iron than they can in dust; that there are, in fact, no royal roads to anywhere worth going to; that if there were, it would that instant cease to be worth going to,—I mean so far as the things to be obtained are in any way estimable in terms of *price*. For there are two classes of precious things in the world: those that God gives us for nothing—sun, air, and life (both mortal life and immortal); and the secondarily precious things which he gives us for a price: these secondarily precious things, worldly wine and milk, can only be bought for definite money; they never can be cheapened. No cheating nor bargaining will ever get a single thing out of

nature's "establishment" at half-price. Do we want to be strong?—we must work. To be hungry?—we must starve. To be happy?—we must be kind. To be wise?—we must look and think. No changing of place at a hundred miles an hour, nor making of stuffs a thousand yards a minute, will make us one whit stronger, happier, or wiser. There was always more in the world than men could see, walked they ever so slowly; they will see it no better for going fast. And they will at last, and soon too, find out that their grand inventions for conquering (as they think) space and time, do, in reality, conquer nothing; for space and time are, in their own essence, unconquerable, and besides did not want any sort of conquering; they wanted *using*. A fool always wants to shorten space and time: a wise man wants to lengthen both. A fool wants to kill space and kill time: a wise man, first to gain them, then to animate them. Your railroad, when you come to understand it, is only a device for making the world smaller: and as for being able to talk from place to place, that is, indeed, well and convenient; but suppose you have, originally, nothing to say.* We shall be obliged at last to confess, what we should long ago have known, that the really precious things are thought and sight, not pace. It does a bullet no good to go fast; and a man, if he be truly a man, no harm to go slow; for his glory is not at all in going, but in being.

§ 36. "Well; but railroads and telegraphs are so useful for communicating knowledge to savage nations." Yes, if you have any to give them. If you know nothing *but* railroads, and can communicate nothing but aqueous vapor and gunpowder,—what then? But if you have any other thing than those to give, then the railroad is of use only because it communicates that other thing, and the question is—what that other thing may be. Is it religion? I believe if we had really wanted to communicate that, we could have done it in less than 1800 years, without steam. Most of the good religious communication that I remember has been done on foot; and it cannot be easily done faster than at foot pace. Is it science? But what sci-

* "The light-outspeeding telegraph
Bears nothing on its beam." EMERSON.

See Appendix III., Plagiarism.

ence—of motion, meat, and medicine? Well; when you have moved your savage, and dressed your savage, fed him with white bread, and shown him how to set a limb,—what next? Follow out that question. Suppose every obstacle overcome; give your savage every advantage of civilization to the full: suppose that you have put the Red Indian in tight shoes; taught the Chinese how to make Wedgwood's ware, and to paint it with colors that will rub off; and persuaded all Hindoo women that it is more pious to torment their husbands into graves than to burn themselves at the burial,—what next? Gradually, thinking on from point to point, we shall come to perceive that all true happiness and nobleness are near us, and yet neglected by us; and that till we have learned how to be happy and noble, we have not much to tell, even to Red Indians. The delights of horse-racing and hunting, of assemblies in the night instead of the day, of costly and wearisome music, of costly and burdensome dress, of chagrined contention for place or power, or wealth, or the eyes of the multitude; and all the endless occupation without purpose, and idleness without rest, of our vulgar world, are not, it seems to me, enjoyments we need be ambitious to communicate. And all real and wholesome enjoyments possible to man have been just as possible to him, since first he was made of the earth, as they are now; and they are possible to him chiefly in peace. To watch the corn grow, and the blossoms set; to draw hard breath over ploughshare or spade; to read, to think, to love, to hope, to pray,—these are the things that make men happy; they have always had the power of doing these, they never *will* have power to do more. The world's prosperity or adversity depends upon our knowing and teaching these few things: but upon iron, or glass, or electricity, or steam, in no wise.

§ 37. And I am Utopian and enthusiastic enough to believe, that the time will come when the world will discover this. It has now made its experiments in every possible direction but the right one; and it seems that it must, at last, try the right one, in a mathematical necessity. It has tried fighting, and preaching, and fasting, buying and selling, pomp and parsimony, pride and humiliation,—every possible manner of existence in which it could conjecture there was any happiness or

dignity; and all the while, as it bought, sold, and fought, and fasted, and wearied itself with policies, and ambitions, and self-denials, God had placed its real happiness in the keeping of the little mosses of the wayside, and of the clouds of the firmament. Now and then a weary king, or a tormented slave, found out where the true kingdoms of the world were, and possessed himself, in a furrow or two of garden ground, of a truly infinite dominion. But the world would not believe their report, and went on trampling down the mosses, and forgetting the clouds, and seeking happiness in its own way, until, at last, blundering and late, came natural science; and in natural science not only the observation of things, but the finding out of new uses for them. Of course the world, having a choice left to it, went wrong as usual, and thought that these mere material uses were to be the sources of its happiness. It got the clouds packed into iron cylinders, and made it carry its wise self at their own cloud pace. It got weavable fibres out of the mosses, and made clothes for itself, cheap and fine,—here was happiness at last. To go as fast as the clouds, and manufacture everything out of anything,—here was paradise, indeed!

§ 38. And now, when, in a little while, it is unparadised again, if there were any other mistake that the world could make, it would of course make it. But I see not that there is any other; and, standing fairly at its wits' end, having found that going fast, when it is used to it, is no more paradisiacal than going slow; and that all the prints and cottons in Manchester cannot make it comfortable in its mind, I do verily believe it will come, finally, to understand that God paints the clouds and shapes the moss-fibres, that men may be happy in seeing Him at His work, and that in resting quietly beside Him, and watching His working, and—according to the power He has communicated to ourselves, and the guidance He grants,—in carrying out His purposes of peace and charity among all His creatures, are the only real happinesses that ever were, or will be, possible to mankind.

§ 39. How far art is capable of helping us in such happiness we hardly yet know; but I hope to be able, in the subsequent parts of this work, to give some data for arriving at a conclusion in the matter. Enough has been advanced to relieve the

reader from any lurking suspicion of unworthiness in our subject, and to induce him to take interest in the mind and work of the great painter who has headed the landscape school among us. What farther considerations may, within any reasonable limits, be put before him, respecting the effect of natural scenery on the human heart, I will introduce in their proper places either as we examine, under Turner's guidance, the different classes of scenery, or at the close of the whole work; and therefore I have only one point more to notice here, namely, the exact relation between landscape-painting and natural science, properly so-called.

§ 40. For it may be thought that I have rashly assumed that the Scriptural authorities above quoted apply to that partly superficial view of nature which is taken by the landscape-painter, instead of to the accurate view taken by the man of science. So far from there being rashness in such an assumption, the whole language, both of the book of Job and the Sermon on the Mount, gives precisely the view of nature which is taken by the uninvestigating affection of a humble, but powerful mind. There is no dissection of muscles or counting of elements, but the boldest and broadest glance at the apparent facts, and the most magnificent metaphor in expressing them. "His eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him." And in the often repeated, never obeyed, command, "Consider the lilies of the field," observe there is precisely the delicate attribution of life which we have seen to be the characteristic of the modern view of landscape,—"They toil not." There is no science, or hint of science; no counting of petals, nor display of provisions for sustenance: nothing but the expression of sympathy, at once the most childish, and the most profound,—"They toil not."

§ 41. And we see in this, therefore, that the instinct which leads us thus to attribute life to the lowest forms of organic nature, does not necessarily spring from faithlessness, nor the deducing a moral out of them from an irregular and languid conscientiousness. In this, as in almost all things connected with moral discipline, the same results may follow from contrary causes; and as there are a good and evil contentment, a good and evil discontent, a good and evil care, fear, ambition, and so on,

there are also good and evil forms of this sympathy with nature, and disposition to moralize over it.* In general, active men, of strong sense and stern principle, do not care to see anything in a leaf, but vegetable tissue, and are so well convinced of useful moral truth, that it does not strike them as a new or notable thing when they find it in any way symbolized by material nature; hence there is a strong presumption, when first we perceive a tendency in any one to regard trees as living, and enunciate moral aphorisms over every pebble they stumble against, that such tendency proceeds from a morbid temperament, like Shelley's, or an inconsistent one, like Jaques's. But when the active life is nobly fulfilled, and the mind is then raised beyond it into clear and calm beholding of the world around us, the same tendency again manifests itself in the most sacred way: the simplest forms of nature are strangely animated by the sense of the Divine presence; the trees and flowers seem all, in a sort, children of God; and we ourselves, their fellows, made out of the same dust, and greater than they only in having a greater portion of the Divine power exerted on our frame, and all the common uses and palpably visible forms of things, become subordinate in our minds to their inner glory,—to the mysterious voices in which they talk to us about God, and the changeful and typical aspects by which they witness to us of holy truth, and fill us with obedient, joyful, and thankful emotion.

§ 42. It is in raising us from the first state of inactive reverie to the second of useful thought, that scientific pursuits are to be chiefly praised. But in restraining us at this second stage, and checking the impulses towards higher contemplation, they are to be feared or blamed. They may in certain minds be consistent with such contemplation; but only by an effort: in their nature they are always adverse to it, having a tendency to chill and subdue the feelings, and to resolve all things into atoms and numbers. For most men, an ignorant enjoyment is better than

* Compare what is said before in various places of good and bad finish, good and bad mystery, &c. If a man were disposed to system-making, he could easily throw together a counter-system to Aristotle's, showing that in all things there were two extremes which exactly resembled each other, but of which one was bad, the other good; and a mean, resembling neither, but better than the one, and worse than the other.

an informed one; it is better to conceive the sky as a blue dome than a dark cavity, and the cloud as a golden throne than a sleety mist. I much question whether any one who knows optics, however religious he may be, can feel in equal degree the pleasure or reverence which an unlettered peasant may feel at the sight of a rainbow. And it is mercifully thus ordained, since the law of life, for a finite being, with respect to the works of an infinite one, must be always an infinite ignorance. We cannot fathom the mystery of a single flower, nor is it intended that we should; but that the pursuit of science should constantly be stayed by the love of beauty, and accuracy of knowledge by tenderness of emotion.

§ 43. Nor is it even just to speak of the love of beauty as in all respects unscientific; for there is a science of the aspects of things as well as of their nature; and it is as much a fact to be noted in their constitution, that they produce such and such an effect upon the eye or heart (as, for instance, that minor scales of sound cause melancholy), as that they are made up of certain atoms or vibrations of matter.

It is as the master of this science of *Aspects*, that I said, some time ago, Turner must eventually be named always with Bacon, the master of the science of *Essence*. As the first poet who has, in all their range, understood the grounds of noble emotion which exist in Landscape, his future influence will be of a still more subtle and important character. The rest of this work will therefore be dedicated to the explanation of the principles on which he composed, and of the aspects of nature which he was the first to discern.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF THE TEACHERS OF TURNER.

§ 1. The first step to the understanding either the mind or position of a great man ought, I think, to be an inquiry into the elements of his early instruction, and the mode in which he was affected by the circumstances of surrounding life. In making this inquiry, with respect to Turner, we shall be necessarily led to take note of the causes which had brought landscape-painting into the state in which he found it; and, therefore, of those transitions of style which, it will be remembered, we overleaped (hoping for a future opportunity of examining them) at the close of the fifteenth chapter.

§ 2. And first, I said, it will be remembered, some way back, that the relations between Scott and Turner would probably be found to differ very curiously from those between Dante and Giotto. They differ primarily in this,—that Dante and Giotto, living in a consistent age, were subjected to one and the same influence, and may be reasoned about almost in similar terms. But Scott and Turner, living in an inconsistent age, became subjected to inconsistent influences; and are at once distinguished by notable contrarieties, requiring separate examination in each.

§ 3. Of these, the chief was that Scott, having had the blessing of a totally neglected education, was able early to follow most of his noble instincts; but Turner, having suffered under the instruction of the Royal Academy, had to pass nearly thirty years of his life in recovering from its consequences;* this permanent result following for both,—that Scott never was led into

* The education here spoken of is, of course, that bearing on the main work of life. In other respects, Turner's education was more neglected than Scott's, and that not beneficently. See the close of the third of my Edinburgh Lectures.

any fault foreign to his nature, but spoke what was in him, in rugged or idle simplicity; erring only where it was natural to err, and failing only where it was impossible to succeed. But Turner, from the beginning, was led into constrained and unnatural error; diligently debarred from every ordinary help to success. The one thing which the Academy *ought* to have taught him (namely, the simple and safe use of oil color), it never taught him; but it carefully repressed his perceptions of truth, his capacities of invention, and his tendencies of choice. For him it was impossible to do right but in the spirit of defiance; and the first condition of his progress in learning, was the power to forget.

§ 4. One most important distinction in their feelings throughout life was necessitated by this difference in early training. Scott gathered what little knowledge of architecture he possessed, in wanderings among the rocky walls of Crichtoun, Lochleven, and Linlithgow, and among the delicate pillars of Holyrood, Roslin, and Melrose. Turner acquired his knowledge of architecture at the desk, from academical elevations of the Parthenon and St. Paul's; and spent a large portion of his early years in taking views of gentlemen's seats, temples of the Muses, and other productions of modern taste and imagination; being at the same time directed exclusively to classical sources for information as to the proper subjects of art. Hence, while Scott was at once directed to the history of his native land, and to the Gothic fields of imagination; and his mind was fed in a consistent, natural, and felicitous way from his youth up, poor Turner for a long time knew no inspiration but that of Twickenham; no sublimity but that of Virginia Water. All the history and poetry presented to him at the age when the mind receives its dearest associations, were those of the gods and nations of long ago; and his models of sentiment and style were the worst and last wrecks of the Renaissance affectations.

§ 5. Therefore (though utterly free from affectation), his early works are full of an *enforced* artificialness, and of things ill-done and ill-conceived, because foreign to his own instincts; and, throughout life, whatever he did, because he thought he *ought* to do it, was wrong; all that he planned on any principle,

or in supposed obedience to canons of taste, was false and abortive: he only did right when he ceased to reflect; was powerful only when he made no effort, and successful only when he had taken no aim.

§ 6. And it is one of the most interesting things connected with the study of his art, to watch the way in which his own strength of English instinct breaks gradually through fetter and formalism; how from Egerian wells he steals away to Yorkshire streamlets; how from Homeric rocks, with laurels at the top and caves in the bottom, he climbs, at last, to Alpine precipices fringed with pine, and fortified with the slopes of their own ruins; and how from Temples of Jupiter and Gardens of the Hesperides, a spirit in his feet guides him, at last, to the lonely arches of Whitby, and bleak sands of Holy Isle.

§ 7. As, however, is the case with almost all inevitable evil, in its effect on great minds, a certain good rose even out of this warped education; namely, his power of more completely expressing all the tendencies of his epoch, and sympathizing with many feelings and many scenes which must otherwise have been entirely profitless to him. Scott's mind was just as large and full of sympathy as Turner's; but having been permitted always to take his own choice among sources of enjoyment, Scott was entirely incapable of entering into the spirit of any classical scene. He was strictly a Goth and a Scot, and his sphere of sensation may be almost exactly limited by the growth of heather. But Turner had been forced to pay early attention to whatever of good and right there was even in things naturally distasteful to him. The charm of early association had been cast around much that to other men would have been tame: while making drawings of flower-gardens and Palladian mansions, he had been taught sympathy with whatever grace or refinement the garden or mansion could display, and to the close of life could enjoy the delicacy of trellis and parterre, as well as the wildness of the wood and the moorland; and watch the staying of the silver fountain at its appointed height in the sky, with an interest as earnest, if not as intense, as that with which he followed the crash of the Alpine cataract into its clouds of wayward rage.

§ 8. The distinct losses to be weighed against this gain are,

first, the waste of time during youth in painting subjects of no interest whatsoever, — parks, villas, and ugly architecture in general: secondly, the devotion of its utmost strength in later years to meaningless classical compositions, such as the Fall and Rise of Carthage, Bay of Baiæ, Daphne and Leucippus, and such others, which, with infinite accumulation of material, are yet utterly heartless and emotionless, dead to the very root of thought, and incapable of producing wholesome or useful effect on any human mind, except only as exhibitions of technical skill and graceful arrangement: and, lastly, his incapacity, to the close of life, of entering heartily into the spirit of any elevated architecture; for those Palladian and classical buildings which he had been taught that it was right to admire, being wholly devoid of interest, and in their own formality and barrenness quite unmanageable, he was obliged to make them manageable in his pictures by disguising them, and to use all kinds of playing shadows and glittering lights to obscure their ugly details; and as in their best state such buildings are white and colorless, he associated the idea of whiteness with perfect architecture generally, and was confused and puzzled when he found it grey. Hence he never got thoroughly into the feeling of Gothic; its darkness and complexity embarrassed him; he was very apt to whiten by way of idealizing it, and to cast aside its details in order to get breadth of delicate light. In Venice, and the towns of Italy generally, he fastened on the wrong buildings, and used those which he chose merely as kind of white clouds, to set off his brilliant groups of boats, or burning spaces of lagoon. In various other minor ways, which we shall trace in their proper place, his classical education hindered or hurt him; but I feel it very difficult to say how far the loss was balanced by the general grasp it gave his mind; nor am I able to conceive what would have been the result, if his aims had been made at once narrower and more natural, and he had been led in his youth to delight in Gothic legends instead of classical mythology; and, instead of the porticos of the Parthenon, had studied in the aisles of Nôtre Dame.

§ 9. It is still more difficult to conjecture whether he gathered most good or evil from the pictorial art which surrounded him in his youth. What that art was, and how the European

schools had arrived at it, it now becomes necessary briefly to inquire.

It will be remembered that, in the 14th chapter, we left our mediæval landscape (§ 18.) in a state of severe formality, and perfect subordination to the interest of figure subject. I will now rapidly trace the mode and progress of its emancipation.

§ 10. The formalized conception of scenery remained little altered until the time of Raphael, being only better executed as the knowledge of art advanced; that is to say, though the trees were still stiff, and often set one on each side of the principal figures, their color and relief on the sky were exquisitely imitated, and all groups of near leaves and flowers drawn with the most tender care, and studious botanical accuracy. The better the subjects were painted, however, the more logically absurd they became: a background wrought in Chinese confusion of towers and rivers, was in early times passed over carelessly, and forgiven for the sake of its pleasant color; but it appealed somewhat too far to imaginative indulgence when Ghirlandajo drew an exquisite perspective view of Venice and her lagoons behind an Adoration of the Magi;* and the impossibly small boats which might be pardoned in a mere illumination, representing the miraculous draught of fishes, became, whatever may be said to the contrary, inexcusably absurd in Raphael's fully realized landscape; so as at once to destroy the credibility of every circumstance of the event.

§ 11. A certain charm, however, attached itself to many forms of this landscape, owing to their very unnaturalness, as I have endeavored to explain already in the last chapter of the second volume, §§ 9. to 12.; noting, however, there, that it was in no wise to be made a subject of imitation; a conclusion which I have since seen more and more ground for holding finally. The longer I think over the subject, the more I perceive that the pleasure we take in such unnatural landscapes is intimately connected with our habit of regarding the New Testament as a beautiful poem, instead of a statement of plain facts. He who believes thoroughly that the events are true will expect, and ought to expect, real olive copse behind real Madonna, and no sentimental absurdities in either.

* The picture is in the Uffizii of Florence.

J. Ruskin, after Raphael. J. C. Armytage

11. Latest Purism.

§ 12. Nor am I at all sure how far the delight which we take (when I say *we*, I mean, in general, lovers of old sacred art) in such quaint landscape, arises from its peculiar *falsehood*, and how far from its peculiar *truth*. For as it falls into certain errors more boldly, so, also, what truth it states, it states more firmly than subsequent work. No engravings, that I know, render the backgrounds of sacred pictures with sufficient care to enable the reader to judge of this matter unless before the works themselves. I have, therefore, engraved, on the opposite page, a bit of the background of Raphael's Holy Family, in the Tribune of the Uffizii, at Florence. I copied the trees leaf for leaf, and the rest of the work with the best care I could; the engraver, Mr. Armytage, has admirably rendered the delicate atmosphere which partly veils the distance. Now I do not know how far it is necessary to such pleasure as we receive from this landscape, that the trees should be both so straight and formal in stem, and should have branches no thicker than threads; or that the outlines of the distant hills should approximate so closely to those on any ordinary Wedgewood's china pattern. I know that, on the contrary, a great part of the pleasure arises from the sweet expression of air and sunshine; from the traceable resemblance of the city and tower to Florence and Fésole; from the fact that, though the boughs are too thin, the lines of ramification are true and beautiful; and from the expression of continually varied form in the clusters of leafage. And although all lovers of sacred art would shrink in horror from the idea of substituting for such a landscape a bit of Cuyp or Rubens, I do not think that the horror they feel is because Cuyp and Rubens's landscape is *truer*, but because it is *coarser* and more vulgar in associated idea than Raphael's; and I think it possible that the true forms of hills, and true thicknesses of boughs, might be tenderly stolen into this background of Raphael's without giving offence to any one.

§ 13. Take a somewhat more definite instance. The rock in Fig. 5., at the side, is one put by Ghirlandajo into the background of his Baptism of Christ. I have no doubt Ghirlandajo's own rocks and trees are better, in several respects, than those here represented, since I have copied them from one of Lasinio's execrable engravings; still, the harsh outline, and

generally stiff and uninventful blankness of the design are true enough, and characteristic of all rock-painting of the period. In the plate below I have etched * the outline of a fragment of one of Turner's cliffs, out of his drawing of Bolton Abbey; and it does not seem to me that, supposing them properly introduced in the composition, the substitution of the soft natural lines for the hard unnatural ones would make Ghirlandajo's background one whit less sacred.

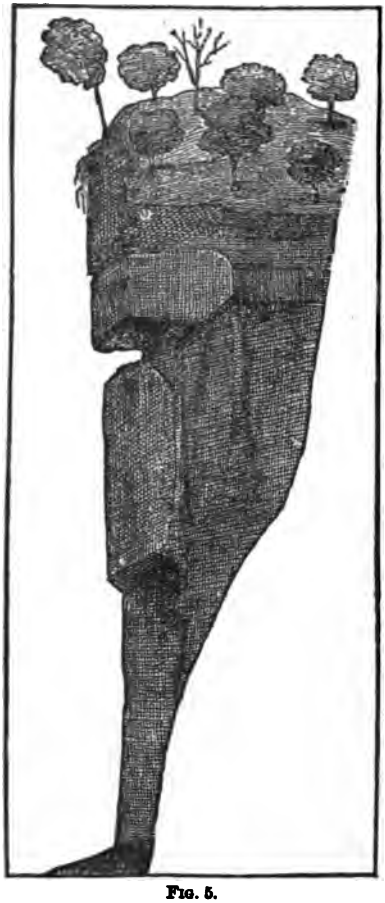


FIG. 5.

§ 14. But be this as it may, the fact is, as ill luck would have it, that profanity of feeling, and skill in art, increased together; so that we do not find the backgrounds rightly painted till the figures become irreligious and feelingless; and hence we associate necessarily the perfect landscape with want of feeling. The first great innovator was either Masaccio or Filippino Lippi: their works are so confused together in the Chapel of the Carmine, that I know not to whom I may attribute,—or whether, without being immediately quarrelled with, and contradicted, I may attribute to anybody,—the landscape background of the fresco of the Tribute Money. But that background, with one or

* This etching is prepared for receiving mezzotint in the next volume; it is therefore much heavier in line, especially in the water, than I should have made it, if intended to be complete as it is.

15. St. George of the Seaweed.

two other fragments in the same chapel, is far in advance of all other work I have seen of the period, in expression of the rounded contours and large slopes of hills, and the association of their summits with the clouds. The opposite engraving will give some better idea of its character than can be gained from the outlines commonly published; though the dark spaces, which in the original are deep blue, come necessarily somewhat too harshly on the eye when translated into light and shade. I shall have occasion to speak with greater speciality of this background in examining the forms of hills; meantime, it is only as an isolated work that it can be named in the history of pictorial progress, for Masaccio died too young to carry out his purposes; and the men around him were too ignorant of landscape to understand or take advantage of the little he had done. Raphael, though he borrowed from him in the human figure, never seems to have been influenced by his landscape, and retains either, as in Plate 11., the upright formalities of Perugino; or, by way of being natural, expands his distances into flattish flakes of hill, nearly formless, as in the backgrounds of the Charge to Peter and Draught of Fishes; and thenceforward the Tuscan and Roman schools grew more and more artificial, and lost themselves finally under round-headed niches and Corinthian porticos.

§ 15. It needed, therefore, the air of the northern mountains and of the sea to brace the hearts of men to the development of the true landscape schools. I sketched by chance one evening the line of the Apennines from the ramparts of Parma, and I have put the rough note of it, and the sky that was over it, in Plate 14., and next to this (Plate 15.) a moment of sunset, behind the Euganean hills at Venice. I shall have occasion to refer to both hereafter; but they have some interest here as types of the kind of scenes which were daily set before the eyes of Correggio and Titian, and of the sweet free spaces of sky through which rose and fell, to them, the colored rays of the morning and evening.

§ 16. And they are connected, also, with the forms of landscape adopted by the Lombardic masters, in a very curious way. We noticed that the Flemings, educated entirely in flat land, seemed to be always contented with the scenery it supplied; and

we should naturally have expected that Titian and Correggio, living in the midst of the levels of the lagoons, and of the plain of Lombardy, would also have expressed, in their backgrounds, some pleasure in such level scenery, associated, of course, with the sublimity of the far-away Apennine, Euganean, or Alp. But not a whit. The plains of mulberry and maize, of sea and shoal, by which they were surrounded, never occur in their backgrounds but in cases of necessity; and both of them, in all their important landscapes, bury themselves in wild wood; Correggio delighting to relieve with green darkness of oak and ivy the golden hair and snowy flesh of his figures; and Titian, whenever the choice of a scene was in his power, retiring to the narrow glens and forests of Cadore.

§ 17. Of the vegetation introduced by both, I shall have to speak at length in the course of the chapters on Foliage; meantime, I give in Plate 16. one of Titian's slightest bits of background, from one of the frescoes in the little chapel behind St. Antonio, at Padua, which may be compared more conveniently than any of his more elaborate landscapes with the purist work from Raphael. For in both these examples the trees are equally slender and delicate, only the formality of mediæval art is, by Titian, entirely abandoned, and the old conception of the aspen grove and meadow done away with for ever. We are now far from cities: the painter takes true delight in the desert; the trees grow wild and free; the sky also has lost its peace, and is writhed into folds of motion, closely impendent upon earth, and somewhat threatening, through its solemn light.

§ 18. Although, however, this example is characteristic of Titian in its wildness, it is not so in its *looseness*. It is only in the distant backgrounds of the slightest work, or when he is in a hurry, that Titian is vague: in all his near and studied work he completes every detail with scrupulous care. The next Plate, 17., a background of Tintoret's, from his picture of the Entombment at Parma, is more entirely characteristic of the Venetians. Some mistakes made in the reduction of my drawing during the course of engraving have cramped the curves of the boughs and leaves, of which I will give the true outline farther on; meantime the subject, which is that described in § 16. of the chapter on Penetrative Imagination, Vol. II., will just as

16. Early Naturalism.

17. Advanced Naturalism.

well answer the purpose of exemplifying the Venetian love of gloom and wildness, united with perfect definition of detail. Every leaf and separate blade of grass is drawn; but observe how the blades of grass are broken, how completely the aim at expression of faultlessness and felicity has been withdrawn, as contrary to the laws of the existent world.

§ 19. From this great Venetian school of landscape Turner received much important teaching,—almost the only healthy teaching which he owed to preceding art. The designs of the Liber Studiorum are founded first on nature, but in many cases modified by *forced* imitation of Claude, and *fond* imitation of Titian. All the worst and feeblest studies in the book—as the pastoral with the nymph playing the tambourine, that with the long bridge seen through trees, and with the flock of goats on the walled road—owe the principal part of their imbecilities to Claude; another group (Solway Moss, Peat Bog, Lauffenbourg, &c.) is taken with hardly any modification by pictorial influence, straight from nature; and the finest works in the book—the Grande Chartreuse, Rizpah, Jason, Cephalus, and one or two more—are strongly under the influence of Titian.

§ 20. The Venetian school of landscape expired with Tintoret, in the year 1594; and the sixteenth century closed, like a grave, over the great art of the world. There is *no* entirely sincere or great art in the seventeenth century. Rubens and Rembrandt are its two greatest men, both deeply stained by the errors and affectations of their age. The influence of the Venetians hardly extended to them; the tower of the Titianesque art fell southwards; and on the dust of its ruins grew various art-weeds, such as Domenichino and the Carraccis. Their landscape, which may in few words be accurately defined as "Scum of Titian," possesses no single merit, nor any ground for the forgiveness of demerit; they are to be named only as a link through which the Venetian influence came dimly down to Claude and Salvator.

§ 21. Salvator possessed real genius, but was crushed by misery in his youth, and by fashionable society in his age. He had vigorous animal life, and considerable invention, but no depth either of thought or perception. He took some hints directly from nature, and expressed some conditions of the

grotesque of terror with original power; but his baseness of thought, and bluntness of sight, were unconquerable; and his works possess no value whatsoever for any person versed in the walks of noble art. They had little, if any, influence on Turner; if any, it was in blinding him for some time to the grace of tree trunks, and making him tear them too much into splinters.

§ 22. Not so Claude, who may be considered as Turner's principal master. Claude's capacities were of the most limited kind; but he had tenderness of perception, and sincerity of purpose, and he effected a revolution in art. This revolution consisted mainly in setting the sun in heaven.* Till Claude's time no one had seriously thought of painting the sun but conventionally; that is to say, as a red or yellow star, (often) with a face in it, under which type it was constantly represented in illumination; else it was kept out of the picture, or introduced in fragmentary distances, breaking through clouds with almost definite rays. Perhaps the honor of having first tried to represent the real effect of the sun in landscape belongs to Bonifazio, in his pictures of the camps of Israel.† Rubens followed in a kind of bravado, sometimes making the rays issue from anything but the orb of the sun;—here, for instance, Fig. 6., is an outline of the position of the sun (at *s*) with respect to his own rays, in a sunset behind a tournament in the Louvre: and various interesting effects of sunlight issuing from the conventional face-filled orb occur in contemporary missal-painting; for instance, very richly in the Harleian MS. Brit. Mus. 3469. But all this was merely indicative of the tendency to transition which may always be traced in any age before the man comes who is to *accomplish* the transition. Claude took up the new idea seriously, made the sun his subject, and painted the effects of misty shadows cast by his rays over the landscape, and other delicate aerial transitions, as no one had ever done before, and, in some respects, as no one has done in oil color since.

* Compare Vol. I. Part II. Sec. I. Chap. VII. I repeat here some things that were then said; but it is necessary now to review them in connection with Turner's education, as well as for the sake of enforcing them by illustration.

† Now in the old library of Venice.

§ 23. "But, how, if this were so, could his capacities be of the meanest order?" Because doing *one* thing well, or better than others have done it, does not necessarily imply large capacity. Capacity means breadth of glance, understanding of the relations of things, and invention, and these are rare and precious; but there are very few men who have not done *something*, in the course of their lives, better than other people. I could point out many engravers, draughtsmen, and artists, who have each a particular merit in their manner, or particular field of perception, that nobody else has, or ever had. But this does not make them great men, it only indicates a small special capacity of some kind: and all the smaller if the gift be very pe-

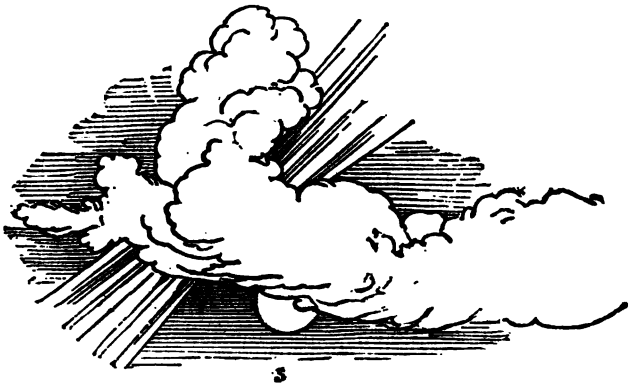


FIG. 6.

culiar and single; for a great man never so limits himself to one thing, as that we shall be able to say, "That's all he can do." If Claude had been a great man he would not have been so steadfastly set on painting effects of sun; he would have looked at all nature, and at all art, and would have painted sun effects somewhat worse, and nature universally much better.

§ 24. Such as he was, however, his discovery of the way to make pictures look warm was very delightful to the shallow connoisseurs of the age. Not that they cared for sunshine; but they liked seeing jugglery. They could not feel Titian's noble color, nor Veronese's noble composition; but they thought it highly amusing to see the sun brought into a picture: and

Claude's works were bought and delighted in by vulgar people then, for their real-looking suns, as pictures are now by vulgar people for having real timepieces in their church towers.

§ 25. But when Turner arose, with an earnest desire to paint the whole of nature, he found that the existence of the sun was an important fact, and by no means an easily manageable one. *He* loved sunshine for its own sake; but he could not at first paint it. Most things else, he would more or less manage without much technical difficulty; but the burning orb and the golden haze could not, somehow, be got out of the oil paint. Naturally he went to Claude, who really had got them out of oil paint; approached him with great reverence, as having done that which seemed to Turner most difficult of all technical matters, and he became his faithful disciple. How much he learned from him of manipulation, I cannot tell; but one thing is certain, that he never quite equalled him in that particular forte of his. I imagine that Claude's way of laying on oil color was so methodical that it could not possibly be imitated by a man whose mechanism was interfered with by hundreds of thoughts and aims totally different from Claude's; and, besides, I suppose that certain useful principles in the management of paint, of which our schools are now wholly ignorant, had come down as far as Claude, from the Venetians. Turner at last gave up the attempt, and adopted a manipulation of his own, which indeed effected certain objects attainable in no other way, but which still was in many respects unsatisfactory, dangerous, and deeply to be regretted.

§ 26. But meantime his mind had been strongly warped by Claude's futilities of conception. It was impossible to dwell on such works for any length of time without being grievously harmed by them; and the style of Turner's compositions was for ever afterwards weakened or corrupted. For, truly, it is almost beyond belief into what depth of absurdity Claude plunges continually in his most admired designs. For instance; undertaking to paint Moses at the Burning Bush, he represents a graceful landscape with a city, a river, and a bridge, and plenty of tall trees, and the sea, and numbers of people going about their business and pleasure in every direction; and the bush burning quietly upon a bank in the corner; rather in the

dark, and not to be seen without close inspection. It would take some pages of close writing to point out, one by one, the inanities of heart, soul, and brain which such a conception involves; the ineffable ignorance of the nature of the event and of the scene of it; the incapacity of conceiving anything even *in* ignorance, which should be impressive; the dim, stupid, serene, leguminous enjoyment of his sunny afternoon—burn the bushes as much as they liked—these I leave the reader to think over at his leisure, either before the picture in Lord Ellesmere's gallery, or the sketch of it in the Liber Veritatis. But all these kinds of fallacy sprung more or less out of the vices of the time in which Claude lived; his own peculiar character reaches beyond these, to an incapacity of understanding the *main point* in anything he had to represent, down to the minutest detail, which is quite unequalled, as far as I know, in human nugatoriness. For instance; here, in Fig. 7., is the head, with half the body, of Eneas drawing his Bow, from No. 180. of the Liber Veritatis. Observe, the string is too long by half; for if the bow were unbent, it would be two feet longer than the whole bow. Then the arrow is too long by half, has too heavy a head by half; and finally, it actually is *under* the bow-hand, instead of above it. Of the ideal and heroic refinement of the head and drapery I will say nothing; but look only at the wretched archery, and consider if it would be possible for any child to draw the thing with less understanding, or to make more mistakes in the given compass.*

FIG. 7.

§ 27. And yet, exquisite as is Claude's instinct for blunder,

* My old friend Blackwood complains bitterly, in his last number, of my having given this illustration at one of my late lectures, saying, that I "have a disagreeable knack of finding out the joints in my opponent's armor," and that "I never fight for love." I never do. I fight for truth, earnestly, and in no wise for jest; and against all lies, earnestly, and in no wise for love. They complain that "a noble adversary is not in Mr. Ruskin's way." No; a noble adversary never was, never will be. With all that is noble I have been, and shall be, in perpetual peace, with all that is ignoble and false everlastingly at war. And as for these Scotch *bourgeois gentilshommes* with their "Tu n'as pas la patience que je pare," let them look to their fence.

he has not strength of mind enough to blunder in a wholly original manner, but he must needs falter out of his way to pick up other people's puerilities, and be absurd at second-hand. I have been obliged to laugh a little—though I hope reverently — at Ghirlandajo's landscapes, which yet we saw had a certain charm of quaintness in them when contrasted with his grand figures; but could any one have believed that Claude, with all the noble landscapes of Titian set before him, and all nature round about him, should yet go back to Ghirlandajo for types of form. Yet such is the case. I said that the Venetian influence came dimly down to Claude; but the old Florentine influence came clearly. The Claudesque landscape is not, as so commonly supposed, an idealized abstract of the nature about Rome. It is an ultimate condition of the Florentine conventional landscape, more or less softened by reference to nature. Fig. 8., from No. 145. of the Liber Veritatis, is sufficiently characteristic of Claude's rock-drawing; and compared with Fig. 5. (p. 314), will show exactly the kind of modification he made on old and received types. We shall see other instances of it hereafter.

FIG. 8.

But truly, if they will tell me where Claude's strong points are, I will strike there, and be thankful.

Imagine this kind of reproduction of whatever other people had done worst, and this kind of misunderstanding of all that he saw himself in nature, carried out in Claude's trees, rocks, ships—in everything that he touched,—and then consider what kind of school this work was for a young and reverent disciple. As I said, Turner never recovered the effects of it; his compositions were always mannered, lifeless, and even foolish; and he only did noble things when the immediate presence of nature had overpowered the reminiscences of his master.

§ 28. Of the influence of Gaspar and Nicolo Poussin on Turner, there is hardly anything to be said, nor much respecting that which they had on landscape generally. Nicolo Poussin had noble powers of design, and might have been a thoroughly great painter had he been trained in Venice; but his Roman education kept him tame; his trenchant severity was contrary to the tendencies of the age, and had few imitators compared to the dashing of Salvator, and the mist of Claude. Those few imitators adopted his manner without possessing either his science or invention; and the Italian school of landscape soon expired. Reminiscences of him occur sometimes in Turner's compositions of sculptured stones for foreground; and the beautiful Triumph of Flora, in the Louvre, probably first showed Turner the use of definite flower, or blossom-painting, in landscape. I doubt if he took anything from Gaspar; whatever he might have learned from him respecting masses of foliage and golden distances, could have been learned better, and, I believe, *was* learned, from Titian.

§ 29. Meantime, a lower, but more living school had developed itself in the north; Cuyp had painted sunshine as truly as Claude, gilding with it a more homely, but far more honestly conceived landscape; and the effects of light of De Hooghe and Rembrandt presented examples of treatment to which southern art could show no parallel. Turner evidently studied these with the greatest care, and with great benefit in every way; especially this, that they neutralized the idealisms of Claude, and showed the young painter what power might be in plain truth, even of the most familiar kind. He painted several pictures in imitation of these masters; and those in which he tried to rival Cuyp are healthy and noble works, being, in fact, just what

most of Cuyp's own pictures are—faithful studies of Dutch boats in calm weather, on smooth water. De Hooghe was too precise, and Rembrandt too dark, to be successfully or affectionately followed by him; but he evidently learned much from both.

§ 30. Finally, he painted many pictures in the manner of Vandevelde (who was the accepted authority of his time in sea painting), and received much injury from him. To the close of his life, Turner always painted the sea too grey, and too opaque, in consequence of his early study of Vandevelde. He never seemed to perceive color so truly in the sea as he saw it elsewhere. But he soon discovered the poorness of Vandevelde's forms of waves, and raised their meanly divided surfaces into massive surge, effecting rapidly other changes, of which more in another place.

Such was the art to which Turner, in early years, devoted his most earnest thoughts. More or less respectful contemplation of Reynolds, Loutherbourg, Wilson, Gainsborough, Morland, and Wilkie, was incidentally mingled with his graver study; and he maintained a questioning watchfulness of even the smallest successes of his brother artists of the modern landscape school. It remains for us only to note the position of that living school when Turner, helped or misled, as the case may be, by the study of the older artists, began to consider what remained for him to do, or design.

§ 31. The dead schools of landscape, composed of the works we have just been examining, were broadly divisible into northern and southern: the Dutch schools, more or less natural, but vulgar; the Italian, more or less elevated, but absurd. There was a certain foolish elegance in Claude, and a dull dignity in Gaspar; but then their work resembled nothing that ever existed in the world. On the contrary, a canal or cattle piece of Cuyp's had many veracities about it; but they were, at best, truths of the ditch and dairy. The grace of nature, or her gloom, her tender and sacred seclusions, or her reach of power and wrath, had never been painted; nor had *anything* been painted yet in true *love* of it; for both Dutch and Italians agreed in this, that they always painted for the *picture's* sake, to show how well they could imitate sunshine, arrange masses, or articu-

late straws,—never because they loved the scene, or wanted to carry away some memory of it.

And thus, all that landscape of the old masters is to be considered merely as a struggle of expiring skill to discover some new direction in which to display itself. There was no love of nature in the age; only a desire for something new. Therefore those schools expired at last, leaving the chasm of nearly utter emptiness between them and the true moderns, out of which chasm the new school rises, not engrafted on that old one, but, from the very base of all things, beginning with mere washes of Indian ink, touched upon with yellow and brown; and gradually feeling its way to color.

But this infant school differed inherently from that ancienter one, in that its motive was love. However feeble its efforts might be, they were *for the sake of the nature*, not of the picture, and therefore, having this germ of true life, it grew and throve. Robson did not paint purple hills because he wanted to show how he could lay on purple; but because he truly loved their dark peaks. Fielding did not paint downs to show how dexterously he could sponge out mists; but because he loved downs.

This modern school, therefore, became the only true school of landscape which had yet existed; the artificial Claude and Gaspar work may be cast aside out of our way,—as I have said in my Edinburgh lectures, under the general title of "pastoralism,"—and from the last landscape of Tintoret, if we look for *life*, we must pass at once to the first of Turner.

§ 32. What help Turner received from this or that companion of his youth is of no importance to any one now. Of course every great man is always being helped by everybody,* for his gift is to get good out of all things and all persons; and also there were two men associated with him in early study, who showed high promise in the same field, Cousen and Girtin (especially the former), and there is no saying what these men might have done had they lived; there might, perhaps, have been a

* His first drawingtmaster was, I believe, that Mr. Lowe, whose daughters, now aged and poor, have, it seems to me, some claim on public regard, being connected distantly with the memory of Johnson, and closely with that of Turner.

struggle between one or other of them and Turner, as between Giorgione and Titian. But they lived not; and Turner is the only great man whom the school has yet produced,—quite great enough, as we shall see, for all that needed to be done. To him, therefore, we now finally turn, as the sole object of our inquiry. I shall first reinforce, with such additions as they need, those statements of his general principles which I made in the first volume, but could not then demonstrate fully, for want of time to prepare pictorial illustration; and then proceed to examine, piece by piece, his representations of the facts of nature, comparing them, as it may seem expedient, with what had been accomplished by others.

I cannot close this volume without alluding briefly to a subject of different interest from any that have occupied us in its pages. For it may, perhaps, seem to a general reader heartless and vain to enter zealously into questions about our arts and pleasures in a time of so great public anxiety as this.

But he will find, if he looks back to the sixth paragraph of the opening chapter of the last volume, some statement of feelings, which, as they made me despondent in a time of apparent national prosperity, now cheer me in one which, though of stern trial, I will not be so much a coward as to call one of adversity. And I derive this encouragement first from the belief that the War itself, with all its bitterness, is, in the present state of the European nations, productive of more good than evil; and, secondly, because I have more confidence than others generally entertain, in the justice of its cause.

I say, first, because I believe the war is at present productive of good more than of evil. I will not argue this hardly and coldly, as I might, by tracing in past history some of the abundant evidence that nations have always reached their highest virtue, and wrought their most accomplished works, in times of straitening and battle; as, on the other hand, no nation ever yet enjoyed a protracted and triumphant peace without receiving in its own bosom ineradicable seeds of future decline. I will not so argue this matter; but I will appeal at once to the testimony of those whom the war has cost the dearest. I know what would be told me, by those who have suffered nothing;

whose domestic happiness has been unbroken; whose daily comfort undisturbed; whose experience of calamity consists, at its utmost, in the incertitude of a speculation, the dearness of a luxury, or the increase of demands upon their fortune which they could meet fourfold without inconvenience. From these, I can well believe, be they prudent economists, or careless pleasure-seekers, the cry for peace will rise alike vociferously, whether in street or senate. But I ask *their* witness, to whom the war has changed the aspect of the earth, and imagery of heaven, whose hopes it has cut off like a spider's web, whose treasure it has placed, in a moment, under the seals of clay. Those who can never more see sunrise, nor watch the climbing light gild the Eastern clouds, without thinking what graves it has gilded, first, far down behind the dark earth-line,—who never more shall see the crocus bloom in spring, without thinking what dust it is that feeds the wild flowers of Balaclava. Ask *their* witness, and see if they will not reply that it is well with them, and with theirs; that they would have it no otherwise; would not, if they might, receive back their gifts of love and life, nor take again the purple of their blood out of the cross on the breastplate of England. Ask them: and though they should answer only with a sob, listen if it does not gather upon their lips into the sound of the old Seyton war-cry—"Set on."

And this not for pride—not because the names of their lost ones will be recorded to all time, as of those who held the breach and kept the gate of Europe against the North, as the Spartans did against the East; and lay down in the place they had to guard, with the like home message, "Oh, stranger, go and tell the English that we are lying here, having obeyed their words;"—not for this, but because, also, they have felt that the spirit which has discerned them for eminence in sorrow—the helmed and sworded skeleton that rakes with its white fingers the sands of the Black Sea beach into grave-heap after grave-heap, washed by everlasting surf of tears—has been to them an angel of other things than agony; that they have learned, with those hollow, undeceivable eyes of his, to see all the earth by the sunlight of deathbeds;—no inch-high stage for foolish griefs and feigned pleasures; no dream, neither, as its dull moralists told them;—*Any*thing but that: a place of

true, marvellous, inextricable sorrow and power; a question-chamber of trial by rack and fire, irrevocable decision recording continually; and no sleep, nor folding of hands, among the demon-questioners; none among the angel-watchers, none among the men who stand or fall beside those hosts of God. They know now the strength of sacrifice, and that its flames can illumine as well as consume; they are bound by new fidelities to all that they have saved,—by new love to all for whom they have suffered; every affection which seemed to sink with those dim life-stains into the dust, has been delegated, by those who need it no more, to the cause for which they have expired; and every mouldering arm, which will never more embrace the beloved ones, has bequeathed to them its strength and its faithfulness.

For the cause of this quarrel is no dim, half-avoidable involution of mean interests and errors, as some would have us believe. There never was a great war caused by such things. There never can be. The historian may trace it, with ingenious trifling, to a courtier's jest or a woman's glance; but he does not ask—(and it is the sum of questions)—how the warring nations had come to found their destinies on the course of the sneer, or the smile. If they have so based them, it is time for them to learn, through suffering, how to build on other foundations;—for great, accumulated, and most righteous cause, their foot slides in due time; and against the torpor, or the turpitude, of their myriads, there is loosed the haste of the devouring sword and the thirsty arrow. But if they have set their fortunes on other than such ground, then the war must be owing to some deep conviction or passion in their own hearts,—a conviction which, in resistless flow, or reckless ebb, or consistent stay, is the ultimate arbiter of battle, disgrace, or conquest.

Wherever there is war, there *must* be injustice on one side or the other, or on both. There have been wars which were little more than trials of strength between friendly nations, and in which the injustice was not to each other, but to the God who gave them life. But in a malignant war of these present ages there is injustice of ignobler kind, at once to God and man, which *must* be stemmed for both their sakes. It may, indeed, be so involved with national prejudices, or ignorances, that

neither of the contending nations can conceive it as attaching to their cause; nay, the constitution of their governments, and the clumsy crookedness of their political dealings with each other, may be such as to prevent either of them from knowing the actual cause for which they have gone to war. Assuredly this is, in a great degree, the state of things with *us*; for I noticed that there never came news by telegraph of the explosion of a powder-barrel, or of the loss of thirty men by a sortie, but the Parliament lost confidence immediately in the justice of the war; reopened the question whether we ever should have engaged in it, and remained in a doubtful and repentant state of mind until one of the enemy's powder-barrels blew up also; upon which they were immediately satisfied again that the war was a wise and necessary one. How far, therefore, the calamity may have been brought upon us by men whose political principles shoot annually like the leaves, and change color at every autumn frost:—how loudly the blood that has been poured out round the walls of that city, up to the horse-bridles, may now be crying from the ground against men who did not know, when they first bade shed it, exactly what war was, or what blood was, or what life was, or truth, or what anything else was upon the earth; and whose tone of opinions touching the destinies of mankind depended entirely upon whether they were sitting on the right or left side of the House of Commons;—this, I repeat, I know not, nor (in all solemnity I say it) do I care to know. For if it be so, and the English nation could at the present period of its history be betrayed into a war such as this by the slipping of a wrong word into a protocol, or bewitched into unexpected battle under the budding hallucinations of its sapling senators, truly it is time for us to bear the penalty of our baseness, and learn, as the sleepless steel glares close upon us, how to choose our governors more wisely, and our ways more warily. For that which brings swift punishment in war, must have brought slow ruin in peace; and those who have now laid down their lives for England, have doubly saved her; they have humbled at once her enemies and herself; and have done less for her, in the conquest they achieve, than in the sorrow that they claim.

But it is not altogether thus: we have not been cast into

this war by mere political misapprehensions, or popular ignorances. It is quite possible that neither we nor our rulers may clearly understand the nature of the conflict; and that we may be dealing blows in the dark, confusedly, and as a soldier suddenly awakened from slumber by an unknown adversary. But I believe the struggle was inevitable, and that the sooner it came, the more easily it was to be met, and the more nobly concluded. France and England are both of them, from shore to shore, in a state of intense progression, change, and experimental life. They are each of them beginning to examine, more distinctly than ever nations did yet in the history of the world, the dangerous question respecting the rights of governed, and the responsibilities of governing, bodies; not, as heretofore, foaming over them in red frenzy, with intervals of fetter and straw crown, but in health, quietness, and daylight, with the help of a good Queen and a great Emperor; and to determine them in a way which, by just so much as it is more effective and rational, is likely to produce more permanent results than ever before on the policy of neighboring States, and to force, gradually, the discussion of similar questions into their places of silence. To force it,—for true liberty, like true religion, is always aggressive or persecuted; but the attack is *generally* made upon it by the nation which is to be crushed,—by Persian on Athenian, Tuscan on Roman, Austrian on Swiss; or, as now, by Russia upon us and our allies: her attack appointed, it seems to me, for confirmation of all our greatness, trial of our strength, purging and punishment of our futilities, and establishment for ever, in our hands, of the leadership in the political progress of the world.

Whether this its providential purpose be accomplished, must depend on its enabling France and England to love one another, and teaching these, the two noblest foes that ever stood breast to breast among the nations, first to decipher the law of international charities; first to discern that races, like individuals, can only reach their true strength, dignity, or joy, in seeking each the welfare, and exulting each in the glory, of the other. It is strange how far we still seem from fully perceiving this. We know that two men, cast on a desert island, could not thrive in dispeace; we can understand that four, or twelve,

might still find their account in unity; but that a multitude should thrive otherwise than by the contentions of its classes, or *two* multitudes hold themselves in anywise bound by brotherly law to serve, support, rebuke, rejoice in one another, this seems still as far beyond our conception, as the clearest of commandments, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth," is beyond our habitual practice. Yet, if once we comprehend that precept in its breadth, and feel that what we now call jealousy for our country's honor, is, so far as it tends to other countries' *dis*honor, merely one of the worst, because most complacent and self-gratulatory, forms of irreligion,—a newly breathed strength will, with the newly interpreted patriotism, animate and sanctify the efforts of men. Learning, unchecked by envy, will be accepted more frankly, throned more firmly, guided more swiftly; charity, unchilled by fear, will dispose the laws of each State without reluctance to advantage its neighbor by justice to itself; and admiration, unwarped by prejudice, possess itself continually of new treasure in the arts and the thoughts of the stranger.

If France and England fail of this, if again petty jealousies or selfish interests prevail to unknit their bands from the armored grasp, then, indeed, their faithful children will have fallen in vain; there will be a sound as of renewed lamentation along those Euxine waves, and a shaking among the bones that bleach by the mounds of Sebastopol. But if they fail not of this,—if we, in our love of our queens and kings, remember how France gave to the cause of early civilization, first the greatest, then the holiest, of monarchs;* and France, in her love of liberty, remembers how *we* first raised the standard of Commonwealth, trusted to the grasp of one good and strong hand, witnessed for by victory; and so join in perpetual compact of our different strengths, to contend for justice, mercy, and truth throughout the world,—who dares say that one soldier has died in vain? The scarlet of the blood that has sealed this covenant will be poured along the clouds of a new aurora, glorious in that Eastern heaven; for every sob of wreck-fed breaker round

* Charlemagne and St. Louis.

those Pontic precipices, the floods shall clap their hands between the guarded mounts of the Prince-Angel; and the spirits of those lost multitudes, crowned with the olive and rose among the laurel, shall haunt, satisfied, the willowy brooks and peaceful vales of England, and glide, triumphant, by the poplar groves and sunned coteaux of Seine.

APPENDIX.

I. Claude's Tree-drawing.

The reader may not improbably hear it said, by persons who are incapable of maintaining an honest argument, and therefore incapable of understanding or believing the honesty of an adversary, that I have caricatured, or unfairly chosen, the examples I give of the masters I depreciate. It is evident, in the first place, that I could not, if I were even cunningly disposed, adopt a worse policy than in so doing; for the discovery of caricature or falsity in my representations, would not only invalidate the immediate statement, but the whole book; and invalidate it in the most fatal way, by showing that all I had ever said about "truth" was hypocrisy, and that in my own affairs I expected to prevail by help of lies. Nevertheless it necessarily happens, that in endeavors to facsimile any work whatsoever, bad or good, some changes are induced from the exact aspect of the original. These changes are, of course, sometimes harmful, sometimes advantageous; the bad thing generally gains; the good thing *always* loses: so that I am continually tormented by finding, in my plates of contrasts, the virtue and vice I exactly wanted to talk about, eliminated from *both* examples. In some cases, however, the bad thing will lose also, and then I must either cancel the plate, or increase the cost of the work by preparing another (at a similar risk). or run the chance of incurring the charge of dishonest representation. I desire, therefore, very earnestly, and once for all, to have it understood that whatever I say in the text, bearing on questions of comparison, refers *always* to the *original* works; and that, if the reader has it in his power, I would far rather he should look at those works than

at my plates of them; I only give the plates for his immediate help and convenience: and I mention this, with respect to my plate of Claude's ramification, because, if I have such a thing as a prejudice at all, (and, although I do not myself think I have, people certainly say so,) it is against Claude; and I might, therefore, be sooner suspected of some malice in this plate than in others. But I simply gave the original engravings from the Liber Veritatis to Mr. Le Keux, earnestly requesting that the portions selected might be faithfully copied; and I think he is much to be thanked for so carefully and successfully accomplishing the task. The figures are from the following plates:—

No. 1. Part of the central tree in No. 134. of the Liber Veritatis.
2. From the largest tree " 158.
3. Bushes at root of tree " 134.
4. Tree on the left " 183.
5. Tree on the left " 95.
6. Tree on the left " 72.
7. Principal tree " 92.
8. Tree on the right " 32.

If, in fact, any change be effected in the examples in this plate, it is for the better; for, thus detached, they all look like small boughs, in which the faults are of little consequence; in the original works they are seen to be intended for large trunks of trees, and the errors are therefore pronounced on a much larger scale.

The plate of mediæval rocks (10.) has been executed with much less attention in transcript, because the points there to be illustrated were quite indisputable, and the instances were needed merely to show the *kind* of *thing* spoken of, not the skill of particular masters. The example from Leonardo was, however, somewhat carefully treated. Mr. Cuff copied it accurately from the only engraving of the picture which I believe exists, and with which, therefore, I suppose the world is generally content. That engraving, however, in no respect seems to me to give the look of the light behind Leonardo's rocks; so I afterwards darkened the rocks, and put some light into the sky and lily; and the effect is certainly more like that of the picture than it is in the same portion of the old engraving.

Of the other masters represented in the plates of this vol-

ume, the noblest, Tintoret, has assuredly suffered the most (Plate 17.); first, in my too hasty drawing from the original picture; and, secondly, through some accidental errors of outline which occurred in the reduction to the size of the page; lastly, and chiefly, in the withdrawal of the heads of the four figures underneath, in the shadow, on which the composition entirely depends. This last evil is unavoidable. It is quite impossible to make *extracts* from the great masters without partly spoiling every separated feature; the very essence of a noble composition being, that none should bear separation from the rest.

The plate from Raphael (11) is, I think, on the whole, satisfactory. It cost me much pains, as I had to facsimile the irregular form of every leaf; each being, in the original picture, executed with a somewhat wayward pencil-stroke of vivid brown on the clear sky.

Of the other plates it would be tedious to speak in detail. Generally, it will be found that I have taken most pains to do justice to the masters of whom I have to speak depreciatingly; and that, if there be calumny at all, it is always of Turner, rather than of Claude.

The reader might, however, perhaps suspect me of ill-will towards Constable, owing to my continually introducing him for depreciatory comparison. So far from this being the case, I had, as will be seen in various passages of the first volume, considerable respect for the feeling with which he worked; but I was compelled to do harsh justice upon him now, because Mr. Leslie, in his unadvised and unfortunate *réchauffé* of the fallacious art-maxims of the last century, has suffered his personal regard for Constable so far to prevail over his judgment as to bring him forward as a great artist, comparable in some kind with Turner. As Constable's reputation was, even before this, most mischievous, in giving countenance to the blotting and blundering of Modernism, I saw myself obliged, though unwillingly, to carry the suggested comparison thoroughly out.

II. German Philosophy.

The reader must have noticed that I never speak of German art, or German philosophy, but in depreciation. This, however, is not because I cannot feel, or would not acknowledge, the value and power, within certain limits, of both; but because I also feel that the immediate tendency of the English mind is to rate them too highly; and, therefore, it becomes a necessary task, at present, to mark what evil and weakness there are in them, rather than what good. I also am brought continually into collision with certain extravagances of the German mind, by my own steady pursuit of Naturalism as opposed to Idealism; and, therefore, I become unfortunately cognizant of the evil, rather than of the good; which evil, so far as I feel it, I am bound to declare. And it is not to the point to protest, as the Chevalier Bunsen and other German writers have done, against the expression of opinions respecting their philosophy by persons who have not profoundly or carefully studied it; for the very resolution to study any system of metaphysics profoundly, must be based, in any prudent man's mind, on some preconceived opinion of its worthiness to be studied; which opinion of German metaphysics the naturalistic English cannot be led to form. This is not to be murmured against,—it is in the simple necessity of things. Men who have other business on their hands must be content to choose what philosophy they have occasion for, by the sample; and when, glancing into the second volume of "Hippolytus," we find the Chevalier Bunsen himself talking of a "finite realization of the infinite" (a phrase considerably less rational than "a black realization of white"), and of a triad composed of God, Man, and Humanity* (which is a parallel thing to talking of a triad composed of man, dog, and canineness), knowing those expressions to be pure, definite, and highly finished nonsense, we do not in general trouble ourselves

* I am truly sorry to have introduced such words in an apparently irreverent way. But it would be a guilty reverence which prevented us from exposing fallacy, precisely where fallacy was most dangerous, and shrank from unveiling an error, just because that error existed in parlance respecting the most solemn subjects to which it could possibly be attached.

to look any farther. Some one will perhaps answer that if one always judged thus by the sample, — as, for instance, if one judged of Turner's pictures by the head of a figure cut out of one of them,—very precious things might often be despised. Not, I think, often. If any one went to Turner, expecting to learn figure-drawing from him, the sample of his figure-drawing would accurately and justly inform him that he had come to the wrong master. But if he came to be taught landscape, the smallest fragment of Turner's work would justly exemplify his power. It may sometimes unluckily happen that, in such short trial, we strike upon an accidentally failing part of the thing to be tried, and then we may be unjust; but there is, nevertheless, in multitudes of cases, no other way of judging or acting; and the necessity of occasionally being unjust is a law of life,—like that of sometimes stumbling, or being sick. It will not do to walk at snail's pace all our lives for fear of stumbling, nor to spend years in the investigation of everything which, by specimen, we must condemn. He who seizes all that he plainly discerns to be valuable, and never is unjust but when he honestly cannot help it, will soon be enviable in his possessions, and venerable in his equity.

Nor can I think that the risk of loss is great in the matter under discussion. I have often been told that any one who will read Kant, Strauss, and the rest of the German metaphysicians and divines, resolutely through, and give his whole strength to the study of them, will, after ten or twelve years' labor, discover that there is very little harm in them; and this I can well believe; but I believe also that the ten or twelve years may be better spent; and that any man who honestly wants philosophy not for show, but for *use*, and knowing the Proverbs of Solomon, can, by way of Commentary, afford to buy, in convenient editions, Plato, Bacon, Wordsworth, Carlyle, and Helps, will find that he has got as much as will be sufficient for him and his household during life, and of as good quality as need be.

It is also often declared necessary to study the German controversialists, because the grounds of religion "must be inquired into." I am sorry to hear they have not been inquired into yet; but if it be so, there are two ways of pursuing that inquiry: one for scholarly men, who have leisure on their hands, by read-

ing all that they have time to read, for and against, and arming themselves at all points for controversy with all persons; the other,—a shorter and simpler way,—for busy and practical men, who want merely to find out how to live and die. Now for the learned and leisurely men I am not writing; they know what and how to read better than I can tell them. For simple and busy men, concerned much with art, which is eminently a practical matter, and fatigues the eyes, so as to render much reading inexpedient, I *am* writing; and such men I do, to the utmost of my power, dissuade from meddling with German books; not because I fear inquiry into the grounds of religion, but because the only inquiry which is *possible* to them must be conducted in a totally different way. They have been brought up as Christians, and doubt if they should remain Christians. They cannot ascertain, by investigation, if the Bible be true; but *if it be*, and Christ ever existed, and was God, then, certainly, the Sermon which He has permitted for 1800 years to stand recorded as first of all His own teaching in the New Testament, must be true. Let them take that Sermon and give it fair practical trial: act out every verse of it, with no quibbling or explaining away, except the reduction of such *evidently* metaphorical expressions as "cut off thy foot," "pluck the beam out of thine eye," to their effectively practical sense. Let them act out, or obey, every verse literally for a whole year, so far as they can,—a year being little enough time to give to an inquiry into religion; and if, at the end of the year, they are not satisfied, and still need to prosecute the inquiry, let them try the German system if they choose.

III. Plagiarism.

Some time after I had written the concluding chapter of this work, the interesting and powerful poems of Emerson were brought under my notice by one of the members of my class at the Working Men's College. There is much in some of these poems so like parts of the chapter in question, even in turn of expression, that though I do not usually care to justify myself

from the charge of plagiarism, I felt that a few words were necessary in this instance.

I do not, as aforesaid, justify myself, in general, because I know there is internal evidence in my work of its originality, if people care to examine it; and if they do not, or have not skill enough to know genuine from borrowed work, my simple assertion would not convince them, especially as the charge of plagiarism is hardly ever made but by plagiarists, and persons of the unhappy class who do not believe in honesty but on evidence. Nevertheless, as my work is so much out of doors, and among pictures, that I have time to read few modern books, and am therefore in more danger than most people of repeating, as if it were new, what others have said, it may be well to note, once for all, that any such apparent plagiarism results in fact from my writings being more original than I wish them to be, from my having worked out my whole subject in unavoidable, but to myself hurtful, ignorance of the labors of others. On the other hand, I should be very sorry if I had *not* been continually taught and influenced by the writers whom I love; and am quite unable to say to what extent my thoughts have been guided by Wordsworth, Carlyle, and Helps; to whom (with Dante and George Herbert, in olden time) I owe more than to any other writers;—most of all, perhaps, to Carlyle, whom I read so constantly, that, without wilfully setting myself to imitate him, I find myself perpetually falling into his modes of expression, and saying many things in a "quite other," and, I hope, stronger, way, than I should have adopted some years ago; as also there are things which I hope are said more clearly and simply than before, owing to the influence upon me of the beautiful *quiet* English of Helps. It would be both foolish and wrong to struggle to cast off influences of this kind; for they consist mainly in a real and healthy help;—the master, in writing as in painting, showing certain methods of language which it would be ridiculous, and even affected, not to employ, when once shown; just as it would have been ridiculous in Bonifacio to refuse to employ Titian's way of laying on color, if he felt it the best, because he had not himself discovered it. There is all the difference in the world between this receiving of guidance, or allowing of influence, and wilful imitation, much more, plagia-

rism; nay, the guidance may even innocently reach into local tones of thought, and must do so to some extent; so that I find Carlyle's stronger thinking coloring mine continually; and should be very sorry if I did not; otherwise I should have read him to little purpose. But what I have of my own is still all there, and, I believe, better brought out, by far, than it would have been otherwise. Thus, if we glance over the wit and satire of the popular writers of the day, we shall find that the *manner* of it, so far as it is distinctive, is always owing to Dickens; and that out of his first exquisite ironies branched innumerable other forms of wit, varying with the disposition of the writers; original in the matter and substance of them, yet never to have been expressed as they now are, but for Dickens.

Many people will suppose that for several ideas in the chapters on Landscape I was indebted to Humboldt's Kosmos, and Howitt's Rural Scenery. I am indebted to Mr. Howitt's book for much pleasure, but for no suggestion, as it was not put into my hands till the chapters in question were in type. I wish it had been; as I should have been glad to have taken farther note on the landscape of Theocritus, on which Mr. Howitt dwells with just delight. Other parts of the book will be found very suggestive and helpful to the reader who cares to pursue the subject. Of Humboldt's Kosmos I heard much talk when it first came out, and looked through it cursorily; but thinking it contained no material (connected with my subject)* which I had not already possessed myself of, I have never since referred to the work. I may be mistaken in my estimate of it, but certainly owe it absolutely nothing.

It is also often said that I borrow from Pugin. I glanced at Pugin's Contrasts once, in the Oxford architectural reading-room, during an idle forenoon. His "Remarks on Articles in the Rambler" were brought under my notice by some of the reviews. I never read a word of any other of his works, not feeling, from the style of his architecture, the smallest interest in his opinions.

I have so often spoken, in the preceding pages, of Holman Hunt's picture of the Light of the World, that I may as well, in

* See the Fourth Volume.

this place, glance at the envious charge against it, of being plagiarized from a German print.

It is indeed true that there was a painting of the subject before; and there were, of course, no paintings of the Nativity before Raphael's time, nor of the Last Supper before Leonardo's, else those masters could have laid no claim to originality. But what was still more singular (the verse to be illustrated being, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock"), the principal figure in the antecedent picture was knocking at a door, knocked with its right hand, and had its face turned to the spectator! Nay, it was even robed in a long robe, down to its feet. All these circumstances were the same in Mr. Hunt's picture; and as the chances evidently were a hundred to one that if he had not been helped to the ideas by the German artist, he would have represented the figure as *not* knocking at any door, as turning its back to the spectator, and as dressed in a short robe, the plagiarism was considered as demonstrated. Of course no defence is possible in such a case. All I can say is, that I shall be sincerely grateful to any unconscientious persons who will adapt a few more German prints in the same manner.

Finally, touching plagiarism in general, it is to be remembered that all men who have sense and feeling are being continually helped: they are taught by every person whom they meet, and enriched by everything that falls in their way. The greatest is he who has been oftenest aided; and, if the attainments of all human minds could be traced to their real sources, it would be found that the world had been laid most under contribution by the men of most original power, and that every day of their existence deepened their debt to their race, while it enlarged their gifts to it. The labor devoted to trace the origin of any thought, or any invention, will usually issue in the blank conclusion that there is nothing new under the sun; yet nothing that is truly great can ever be altogether borrowed; and he is commonly the wisest, and is always the happiest, who receives simply, and without envious question, whatever good is offered him, with thanks to its immediate giver.

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